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The slow food movement : an tude on commodity, time, ethics and aesthetics in contemporary life

The Slow Food Movement: an étude on commodity, time, ethics and aesthetics in contemporary life

By

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of the Slow Food Movement (SFM), charting the journey of this grassroots organisation from its ideological and material roots in Bra, Italy to its meteoric development in the advanced capitalist landscapes of England and USA as a consumer-driven, 'eco-gastronomy' movement. It takes to heart the movement's promise for a 'revolution of taste', from which was derived four significant themes, namely: Commodity, Time, Ethics and Aesthetics. Fieldwork was carried out in Italy, England and USA, including sixy-four recorded interviews and ethnographic, moment-to-moment research. The thesis argues that the seemingly archaic attitudes held towards the commodity object, relations of time, ethical values and aesthetic pleasures are the very radical and social action that the SFM and its members undertake in their quest to lead, and live a comtemporary life. A 'nesting' approach was employed to demonstate the strength of this assertion. Firstly, a Marxist analysis moved an undifferentiated commodity towards exploring the character and typology of 'slow food'. Secondly, theories on speed and time consciousness urged a rethinking of time's linearity and the affordance of memory. Thirdly, a dialogue engaged Aristotelian virtues with relations of one and an/other. Fourthly, art encountered aesthetics in delineating the movement's sensorium. The SFM speaks to a modern politics of emotions, ideas and timeliness. The materiality of 'slow food' exhibits taste-in-action, a constantly productive knowledge, sensation and expression of palatable bodies. The complexity of time entwines imagination with responsibility. A good, balanced life — *eudaimonia* — is fashioned from a touching sociality. Geographies of physicality, sociability and sensuality increasingly influence a contentious food world. This thesis demonstrates that the SFM is a force of life. For the members and chosen food matters, the SFM is that which they in name advocate as well as exceed to, in effect, impel its aims and ambitions. This thesis regards an ontology of 'going there', and a philosophy of living creatively.

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I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Helen and Nicholas, for their love knows no bounds...

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author:.

SIGNED: Adeline Tay DATE: 30 January 2009

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARCI	Receation Association of Italian Communists (*Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana*)
DC	Christian Democratic Party (*Democrazia Cristiana*)
PCI	Italian Communist Party (*Partito Communista Italiano*)
PDS	Democratic Party of the Left (*Partito Democratico della Sinistra*)
SF	Slow Food
SFM	Slow Food Movement

Chapter 1: Introduction

"We all go to the same place; let us go there slowly"

(Petrini, cited in Muoio, 2000).

1.1 The Story

Every good movement begins with a story. In this one, the year is 1986, and it places Carlo Petrini, a food-writer and journalist, in Rome staring at the newly opened McDonalds on the *Piazza di Spagna*, at the foot of the historic Spanish Steps. He, and a group of friends, are armed with bowls of penne to protest what he perceives as a threat to Italian food culture and the inevitable spread of 'placeless', 'tasteless' and 'homogenized' fast foods. His battle, if it may be called that, results in a compromise. The golden arches outside the restaurant are removed, but the McDonalds stays. More pertinent, however, is his subsequent response: the formation, in 1989, of the Slow Food Movement.

1.2 The Movement

The thesis centres on this movement. In regarding the (edible) snail as its mascot and symbol to combat what Simmel (1971) might have described as the "over-quickening pace of modern life", Slow Food has as its central tenet, or what it calls its 'manifesto':

"A firm defense of quiet material *pleasure*... to oppose the universal folly of Fast Life; a movement for the protection to the right to *taste*"

(Slow Food Movement, 2002, emphasis added).

Reconsidering the food landscape as such, these invocations to 'pleasure' and 'right to taste' are asserted as the prerogative of both consumers and producers. As Renato Sardo, the then-director of Slow Food International explained, SF marries the interest of gastronomy movements whose "focus[es] are fixed on the entirety of the pleasure of food', with more ascetic environmental/ecological movements rooted in the 'Marxist traditions of explicating methods of food production and their social and historical implications" (Observer Food Monthly, 11 November 2001). SF, in other words, is a movement with an 'eco-gastronomy' consciousness.

This consciousness is not simply worldly; it is brought to fruition at a grassroots level, in groups of what SF refers to as *convivia*. For in addition to 'whom' SF includes must be added the 'what': the concept of 'slow' here relates not only to overriding notions of industrial speed and productivity, but also signals a deliberate adherence to time-honoured methods of agriculture and food practices, and a recognition of the importance of place. Much emphasis, for instance, is afforded the 'table' as the centrepiece around which family and friends gather, and events take place. If it an artefact that has been lost to fast food and culture, it must be found and brought to life again, for it is:

> "At the table [that] we learn moderation, conversation, tolerance, generosity and conviviality; these are civic virtues. The pleasures of the table also beget responsibilities — to one another, to the animals we eat, to the land and to the people who work it".
>
> (Waters, 2006: 13)

Pleasure. Taste. Eco-gastronomy. Dining table. The ideological reach of SF is wide. At present, this international, non-profit organisation counts among its numbers 85 000 members from 132 countries (Slow Food Movement, 2008). Arguably, the multifarious concept of 'slow food' is the "*fil rouge* that sews this movement together" (Petrini, 2001: xii). What makes it a 'movement', however, also cannot be underestimated. In a very literal sense, it moves entities – ideas, practices, people, and things. It also speaks to motivations and desires, processes and networks. SFM is a platform for all these things.

The major initiatives that have been carried out by the SFM from its inception are as follows:

1989 – Inception and 'Manifesto'

1990 – SF *Editore*

1996 – SLOW magazine, *Salone del Gusto*, Ark of Taste

1997 – Cheese

2000 – Presidia, SF Awards for the defence of biodiversity

2001 – www.slowfood.com

2003 – University of Gastronomic Sciences, SF Foundation for biodiversity

2004 – *Terra Madre*

Three prominent concerns guide the framing of these initiatives. The first is knowledge. The editorial arm of SF, established in 1990, has played no small part in aiding a well-organised dissemination of information regarding the activities of SF. Chief among these, till its recent demise, was the quarterly SLOW magazine (1996), which was published in six languages and sent to members worldwide. Also published initially for an Italian audience but increasingly popular (and reputable) now with an international crowd are its wine (*Vini d'Italia*) and local food eateries/taverns (*Osterie*) guide. Ironically, though the *Editore* is not officially part of the SF movement due to its not-for-profit status, it is through its close association with the movement that the outfit comes closest to endorsing and reifying a SF place and/or product. In 2003, an ambitious University of Gastronomic Sciences project was launched, with an intention of bringing together and cementing as serious knowledge all manner of food-related studies. The second, overlapping concern is taste education. The Hall of Taste (*Salone del Gusto*) (1996), alternating each year with Cheese (1997), are events that showcase SF's attention to the need to value quality and diversity of traditional and artisan foodstuff. While Cheese takes place in SF's birth place in Bra, *Salone del Gusto* takes place in Turin and is an altogether bigger affair. During my visit there in 2002, it had — over a period of five days — seen 140 000 people pass through its doors. There were over five hundred producers from Italy and around the world in attendance, where 311 Taste Workshops were held, and a total of 218 cheeses, 1040 wines and 415 categories of food were tasted out ('Salone del Gusto', 2003: 4). The third related concern is social action. To that end, the Ark of Taste (1996), following what Petrini (2001) calls the 'Noah Principle', was launched as a symbolic boat aimed at protecting the 'universe of flavours'. By researching into and concurrently promoting quality, endangered products could be "saved from the flood of standardisation" (ibid: 86). Its aim, thus, was to classify and produce a list of 'gastronomic assets' around the world. An elaboration of this work then took the form of the Presidia project (2000) — translated as a 'garrison fortress' — to financially support struggling farmers whose products were on the verge of

scientific as well as cultural extinction. This was carried out through concrete initiatives which also aided the reactivation of regional economies. An Award scheme (2000), not unlike a SF Oscars, and a Foundation (2003) brought these activities under a single roof, and in 2005 this included the *Terra Madre*, an international meeting of food communities held biennially for 5000 'farmers, breeders, fishermen, processors, distributors, cooks and agricultural experts' (Slow Food Movement, 2008).

In 2006, SF launched a 'Manifesto of Quality' which is considered the culmination of its work thus far, as well as its future direction. A pithy new slogan — 'Good, Clean and Fair' — has interesting resonance with the assertion of this thesis, which I will turn to now.

1.3 The Thesis

The aim of this thesis is this:

To excavate and draw out the philosophy of Slow Food through an engagement with arguably its four most important concerns: the commodity object, relations of time, ethical values and aesthetic pleasure.

1.4 The Slow Food case study

In the thesis, the case study of the SFM and its members are thoroughly entwined with a number of thematic concerns. The original manifesto in Chapter Two is the starting point from which to examine the history of the SFM, carrying on with a further elaboration of its activities in the Italian, and international context, and detailing some of the key personnel involved. Chapter Three, which looks at the methodology that was employed, uses an email that was sent to me by a SF member to consider both the way in which research was conducted, as well as analyse more closely the members who, in various ways, participated in my research. Empirical work which pays close attention to the discursive and practical action of SF members begins in Chapter Four, which explores the commodity object. The Somerset Cheddar Presidium — the first one in the UK — is employed as a hinge to the discussion of the slow commodity. Chapter Five uses, within its discussion of time

and consciousness, vignettes of the story of Soyoung, a cheese-maker, that echo appropriately the complexity of time. It also delineates more directly the various events, organisations and events associated with SF's appraisal of time. The Backus family, and the Napa Valley it resides in is featured in Chapter Six, as a neat case study that affirms the politics and ethical stances of the members that interweaves this ethics chapter. Finally, Chapter Seven metaphorically 'returns' the research back to the members themselves: a case study of Anne and the process story of attaining her Navajo-Churro sheep is featured, but more than that, art, artists, and their aesthetics form a prominent part of the chapter which goes towards showing the enlivening of the SFM.

1.5 Guiding themes

It is necessary at this juncture to explicate the themes of the thesis, namely: commodity, time, ethics and aesthetics. These themes are posited to inform the empirical material of the SFM as well as richly texture the convictions of theory. The questions posed below will arrive from 'within theory'. They will, furthermore, take on two distinct characters. Firstly, they are ontological in nature, dealing with questions relating to the essence of these themes just as they start to unravel how relative these categories may be when juxtaposed with others. Secondly, they entwine theory and SF analysis by going to the heart of how knowledge is obtained for purpose of demonstrating an idea or concept. They are, in other words, also epistemological in nature.

Commodity — A spectre of Marx that has been raised haunts the pre-occupations of this chapter. Thus, the question that arises is not just what a commodity is, but what, exactly, is a SF commodity? What are its characteristics, and how is it then thought of, and enacted, differently? Or, to ask the question in another manner, what is the materiality of SF, and how does it perform the 'thingy-ness' of things? On the other end of things, as it were, resides the consumer. Who is the SF consumer, and how may he/she be considered to form different relationships with the slow object? These questions entail an interrogation of the discreteness of use and exchange values, and those factors which have aided the production of the commodity. How do land and

labour promulgate the slow commodity? What constitutes a 'market'? These all go towards questioning the assumption of commodity's place within capitalist economies, and the necessary practices of individuals, and organisations, to perform them as such.

Time — This chapter interrogates time as an ascendant, serious, and prominent figure in the SFM. What is time, and what makes for a slow time? Conversely, what is fast/quick time? Is it the counterpoise of slow? More broadly, the issue becomes one of what speed is, and what it connotes. In another light, time here is considered via its categories. That is, what does it mean to deal with the historicity of the past, the present moment, and the future that is always becoming? How, in other words, may one understand time differently? And how do things (such as the slow commodity) matter in this time? Questions also arise regarding the idea of memory. How does time deal with instances of memory and remembering, and what sort of relationships do they form with pertinent issues of anticipation, motivation and desire? How indeed, does time become radical time?

Ethics — This chapter looks to lay out how a considered approach to ethics may secure, for SFM, the 'right to taste'. What is this ethics, and on what basis is it formed? A detraction from this path of questioning is also important here, for it allows for a more basic, and arguably, more pertinent question to be asked: Is it possible that ethics is more about what is good than what is right? What, in other words, are the values that an ethical individual should be in possession of? What makes for an ethical (slow) subject? The ambit of ethics, furthermore, should extend beyond the self-fashioned subject. Conceptualising ethics along this line, the question may be posed as such: who is the other, and what and how does the figure of the other appear as? Indeed, whose care and responsibility is it to ensure that an ethical stance is in keeping with the philosophy of the SFM? What are the dimensions that this entails?

Aesthetics — This final theme conjoins the imperative to taste with that of pleasure, returning, as it were, to the strongly desired aims of the SFM expressed at the onset of this chapter. What is the aesthetics that is referred to here? Contained within such

an enquiry are a number of questions that arguably relate to the notion of aesthetics: what is its relation to art, and who are the artists? What is the relation of aesthetics to the senses, and who, or what, is its embodied subject? What are the relations of aesthetics to affects, and how do they then encompass the concerns of the commodity, time and ethics that have come before to render life aesthetically sensible? What, exactly, are its persuasions that lead the SFM and its members towards their chosen qualities of a good, contemporary life?

1.5.1 A Geographer's concern

An allegiance to critical geography will become increasingly obvious as the thesis progresses. Two considerations are gently threaded through. The first relates to the resonating quality of space. For the SFM, as coinciding with my own interests, terrain, *terroir*, and place are important. The physical location is often a constellation of events and moments whose poignancy bears out its identity. But space is also a metaphor for an allowance of creativity, the virtual, and that which is always becoming. It signals — and this is central to the thesis — that the journey matters. The second consideration relates to the resonating quality of scale. If the SFM is to be radical, it would seem that the revolution of taste has to straddle many scalar moments. From a molecule of a pheromone, to the skin of a tomato, the wiry wool of the Navajo-Churro sheep, a face, a block of cheese, a child, a *convivium*, and the world, scale has to effect, and affect in matters of relation that the thesis aims to clarify as it goes along.

1.6 Approach

Some notes on the approach to this thesis and the direction it will take are necessary here. First of these is a reference to the word *étude* — French for '**study**' — which appears in the title of the thesis. The term is employed in a commonsensical way, with an avowed intention to acknowledging the SFM as a body of work, a process of learning in which one can explore, find new meanings, and make inferences and connections around its content. There is, however, a particular reason that the term *étude* has been chosen. In music, whence the terminology derives, an *étude* is a "piece[]

whose principal aim is the development... of a particular aspect of performing technique" (Sadie, 2001: 414). In some sense, the finessing of the thesis goes some way into 'performing' the SF case study at hand. Additionally, it is not a mere exercise but also has to be "sweet and useful', in which 'each piece generally concentrates on a particular aspect of instrumental or compositional technique, often by the repetition of the same figure or feature at various pitches" (Thompson & Temperley, 2002: 434). In this case, the approaches towards commodity, time, ethics and aesthetics — the 'compositional technique' — are brought to bear with the different aspects of the SFM. The study is aimed at explicating the practices of the SFM just as these practices inform the study.

And yet, to imply that that is all an ***étude*** does misses something of an essence, a flavour of slow. I flag, very briefly at this point, Soyoung, a SF member and very well regarded cheese-maker in California. Mirroring her love for music, the name under which she sells her cheeses, Andante Cheese, evokes a stroll, a moderate pace of life as much as her conviction regarding what she considers to be the appropriate speed at which cheese should be made. Their names — Largo, Piccolo, Metronome, Figaro, Nocturne — echo a feeling, an imagination that melds pitch with perfume, an expression of rhythm. SF then, is a musical story, thriving on major and minor keys, harmony and dissonance. It is the simple and the complex, the utter bareness of singular notes as much as the appoggiaturas maximising the beat — it is a rhythm that will follow this thesis to delineate a philosophy towards living.

A second approach regards the **multivocality** of the thesis. It attempts to break through disciplinary strictures, considering the quest for philosophy as much a science as it is an art; where physics complements sensory perception, and physiology and psychology inform as much as sociology and anthropology. It also values the multiple voices that appear in the thesis. A Bergsonian analysis of time consciousness and duration, for instance, may be channelled through the insightful work of Deleuze and Guattari as well as contrast with that of speed theorist Virilio. Or as is the case regarding the teachings of Aristotle, appear at different junctures of

the thesis to provide critical doses of theoretical considerations. All in all, this thesis places as high priority the notion of dialogue.

The **style** of the thesis deserves some comment here, though the success of its modus operandi should be measured implicitly by its stylistic ability to communicate this intention throughout the thesis. Nevertheless, the aim is this: beyond a coherent linearity that leads one chapter to follow another, a 'nesting' approach has effected the arrangement of the chapters. This is as much a philosophy as a technical device. By way of stating this intent broadly, an explication of the commodity form enables a discourse on slow time, with an understanding of commodity and time then contributing to the undertaking of an ethical stance whose link with aesthetics is inextricable. Indeed, it is hoped that the evidence of the chapters will show the complexity of this claim as well as reveal its veracity in a persuasive manner.

The last approach to be discussed is one that asserts that a thesis is effectively a **narrative**. It is one that proposes that the narrative form is compelling as an exposition tool, while at the same time also concluding that the thesis is, in some measure, already a narrative. This is not an equivocation. Rather, it is to recognise that a narrative that is pieced together by stories, told via interviews and ethnographic research, lend as much weight to the theoretical argument being formed as the literature that supports them. The role of language here cannot be underestimated. It is present in talk, speech and action. Language also resides in the unsaid. It is an invocation to the senses as it is to the sensed: language is commonsense.

1.7 Two Preludes, and a Movement in Four Parts

Prelude no. 1: This chapter explores the unique circumstance and factors that allowed for the embedding of the SFM in different grassroots settings, beginning in Italy and spreading out globally. It examines the intersection of three things: history, as a past that is not so much shaped as creatively formed, experimented with and continues to affect the present in unexpected ways; geography, as spurring a consideration of the entities of the state, region and locality as effecting in quite

intricate ways a distinct attitude to place; and politics, in its examination of the evolving role of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in the northern region of Piedmont, and Bra (SF's headquarters) in particular, muddying the waters of conventional left and right politics. Rather, politics here is proposed as forms of persuasion; namely, that which is moved by emotions, good ideas and timeliness. This chapter also explores the role that print media and personas play in contributing to the positive growth of the movement thus far. It introduces in more detail the activities of SF and foregrounds its educative and sensorial aspects as creative endeavours that form the spirit and ethos of SF. It also bases the work in the specific context of the west coast of the USA and in the UK where most of the empirical work was carried out.

Prelude no. 2: A methodology that deals with the multi-faceted nature of SF is always going to be partial. In this respect, I use the idea of a mobile geography, a journey across countries in pursuit of a particular slow food-friend culture as this mobility is itself an approach to such an inquiry. As much as eating is a part of everyday living, my methodology was forged on the *terroir* of everyday practices. A light-footed, moment-to-moment approach does not belie the complexity of the issue. Indeed, it highlights the performativity of the members, as of the SF organisation, and stands as a strong counterpoint to the theoretical work of the later chapters. This interspersed performativity is exactly what Bakhtin (1986) refers to when he speaks of the dialogic. The possibility and limits of embodiment is also considered within an expanded notion of ethical conduct during fieldwork research.

1st movement: Chapter Four on time begins a quartet of substantive themes whose engagement with the SFM forms a core preoccupation of the thesis. Here, commodity takes centre stage. 'Slow food', it is argued, is a specific type of commodity. In interrogating its typology, there is drawn a distinction from a Marxist notion of an undifferentiated commodity. This is carried out through an examination of the terms of exchange which bridges the distance between production and consumption, by considering the movement of the commodity on its travail, and by taking into account the 'commodity moment'. The commodity here, thus, covers much material

and cultural grounds. As form, it is often amorphous, conjoining – and here again, utilising Marxist terms – sign with use and exchange values in relations that precisely do not understand such divisions. Using everyday food items such as tomatoes, commodity typologies and characteristics are evinced from SF advocates. For the first time here, ideas of 'an attention to life' are mentioned, a recurring concept whose semblance will be carried through the following three chapters. The life of a commodity, thus, relates to its ontology as it does the creative labour that brings it into being; the practices of care; and the market that is always more than its phenomena. Appaudurai's (1986) work on 'the social life of things' lends texture to a case study example here of the Somerset Cheddar Cheese Presidium.

2nd movement: The tone of Chapter Five is languorous. Its aims are theoretical. Its purpose is to elucidate precisely how the 'doing' of the SFM has taken hold such that "that which is the most universal is also, at the same time, the most particular" (Badiou, 2005: 67). Divided into three main parts, the first follows the literature on the 'modernity of now', and posits that slow time is at once seemingly opposed to and harmonious with its competing times: time is multiple. In the second part, this notion of time takes on board a similar and perhaps radical understanding towards consciousness. By breaking with the linearity of clock time, consciousness is folded into a moment whose explication, rather paradoxically, hinges on vigorous notions of past, present and future. Imagery and metaphors are used to demonstrate this understanding. In both these sections, a narrative of Soyoung and her journeying with her cheeses will be interwoven as a dream-like, somnambulant narrative sequence. The final part gives back to time the efficacy of the 'present moment', and consciousness that is framed as duration. In this duration, subjects and things matter. One of Zeno's paradoxes is posed to iterate, at first instance, the concurrency of time and matter. Duration also affords a 'zone of indetermination' that promotes practical, sensory action. Slow food is borne by both consciousness and this call to affective action. In this way, matter, as well as its sensate image-matter, obtains an integrity that comes about because of slowness. Slowness then is a rhythmic quality that will be shown to be assuredly democratic.

3rd movement: The formation of an ethical notion is central in Chapter Six. Here, the focus is on the quotidian substance of ethics as an open-ended, processual one. Explaining this, I assert, necessitates aligning value with a modern, moral philosophy: values such as thoughtfulness and balance are put under the microscope, travelling as life in sentient beings, and beings that ontologically are "being[s]-in-common-with" (Nancy, 1991) the SFM. Aristotelian values and ethics, in particular, are employed and refracted within a SF landscape. It takes into serious consideration not just what is better, but what indeed constitutes 'good' — what a good life is. Furthermore, an ethics that is generous in spirit places similar importance on notions of 'self' and 'other'. In the former case, self formations model, behave and work towards performing the ethical subject. These will be depicted, I argue, according to three modes: as concerns — following a reflexive, modern view — of considering one's place in this world at unique time/space junctures coupled with its complexities; as virtues that take on the character of honesty, trust, generosity, openness, temperance, practical wisdom, prudence and friendship; as a relationship with an 'other', which goes towards demonstrating these concerns and virtues most fully. The fashioning of an ethical subject conjoins this final mode with the latter case of an 'other' by suggesting a pre-ontological notion of alterity (Levinas, 1969) as well as an 'originary sociality' (Nancy, 1991). This 'other', in keeping with the earlier chapters, may not just be a person but a recognition too of another thing/commodity as it may also be another time. An example of discursive action as talk — as mediation and as narrative — will be proposed here. A case study story of the Backus family and their goats brings together the embodied attitudes of responsibility and care which, I posit, form the core ethics of SF members. The figure of the stranger is then discussed: the inclusion of this unfamiliar figure is what the SFM requires if it is to extend beyond 'preaching to the choir', that is, to members who already share their ideals and values.

4th movement: Chapter Seven on aesthetics is a culmination of the themes that have come before. The claim that will be demonstrated here is that aesthetics is the encompassing concern of SF as it is the philosophy of life. This is a grand claim, but one that is justified through its aims as well as affirmed by SF members. I wish to

show that life is an art, and art is the bequest of aesthetics: the thesis rests, no more and no less, on the seamless flow between the triumvirates of art, aesthetics and life. Hence a review of each of their contentions as well their overlapping concerns is conducted. These, I will further demonstrate, prompt a revisiting of the five senses; associations, connections and discussion of their interrelated and now-exposed senses focus in on their activities as much as their memory/mnemonic production. Life, as the performance of art and aesthetics, takes on four descriptive fronts whose relevance will be carried through the rest of the chapter. These descriptions of life as language, as body, as knowledge, and as the everyday will be explained through expressions, activities, and in the collective domain of the 'common-sense'. There will be expressions of colour, texture, balance and flow, with an especial attuning to the intimate and the creative bodying forth of artists at work. The thesis then aims to return this body of work, back to its material being. Touch, sometimes considered the basest of senses, will be used to 'reclaim' the senses by considering the touchstones of universality, physicality, the biological and the psychological. Touch, it will be asserted, brings about encounters and invokes in significant and mundane geographic moments and events, an energetic integrity of life. And that, in its simplicity, is the quest and the force of the Slow Food Movement.

Chapter 2: The Advent of the Slow Food Movement

2.1 Introduction

On November 9, 1989, a day no less as that of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a group of nineteen people came together at the Opéra Comique in Paris. Their exact identities are known to few, but perhaps it is not important for from fifteen countries far and wide — Argentina to Austria, Hungary to Venezuela — they gathered for one sole purpose: to be signatories to a document. This document was written by Folco Portinari, a poet and a well-regarded member of the Italian intellectual circles. It constituted a vision and a mission. It was to be, in their words, the official manifesto for the international movement for the defense of and the right to pleasure; a manifesto, then, that would change the way in which we partake of the world:

> *Our century, which began and has developed under the insignia of industrial civilisation, first invented the machine and then took it as its life model.*
>
> *We are enslaved by speed and have all succumbed to the same insidious virus: Fast Life, which disrupts our habits, pervades the privacy of our homes and forces us to eat Fast Foods.*
>
> *To be worthy of the name, Homo Sapiens should rid himself of speed before it reduces him to a species in danger of extinction.*
>
> *A firm defense of quiet material pleasure is the only way to oppose the universal folly of Fast Life.*
>
> *May suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment preserve us from the contagion of the multitude who mistake frenzy for efficiency.*
>
> *Our defense should begin at the table with Slow Food. Let us rediscover the flavours and savours of regional cooking and banish the degrading effects of Fast Food.*
>
> *In the name of productivity, Fast Life has changed our way of being and threatens our environment and our landscapes. So Slow Food is now the only truly progressive answer.*

That is what real culture is all about: developing taste rather than demeaning it. And what better way to set about this than an international exchange of experiences, knowledge, projects?

Slow Food guarantees a better future. Slow Food is an idea that needs plenty of qualified supporters who can help turn this (slow) motion into an international movement, with the little snail as its symbol.

The manifesto is unsurprisingly grandiose; its claims, as befitting the flowery romance language of Italian from which it is translated, couched in heroic terms. Invoking the royal 'we', many sweeping generalisations are made: we, it suggests, all take the machine as a life model, and are all enslaved by speed as we succumb to the same vices. As a result, we need to defend our way of being to which the only progressive solution is Slow Food's. Likewise, prescriptive measures set in binary logic systems and conflating categories appear to dictate our decisions: we have to choose between the slow and fast life. To live the former, the only way to do so is to enjoy quiet, material pleasures. To opt for a fast life is implicitly bad, as is the notion of productivity associated with it. Hence, there is only one 'real' culture, and it involves developing the taste of the regional cuisines that we are all losing. The situation is made to seem dire, so much so that the movement ends up advocating an ambiguous 'right to pleasure' which seems more like a taken-for-granted quality that we, the so-called Homo sapiens, strive for anyway. Indeed, can one take seriously a manifesto which ends with choosing the snail as a mascot for reasons which include that it is 'delicious to eat'? Considered thus, the manifesto can be easily dismissed as a document of highfalutin ideas set in cultural and moral absolutes but low on nuance and practical efficacy.

In this light, perhaps the first question to ask is this: Why does the manifesto matter? In fact, does it matter at all? The SF Manifesto as stated above was in fact first penned in Italian two years prior in 1987. Signed at that time by thirteen popular personalities from diverse realms such as culture, politics and the academy, their endorsement attested to the already established presence of SF in Italy. Why then was it necessary for another group of people to meet in Paris to sign the same document? Why did the Italian antecedent need an English version?

In this chapter, I answer these questions by tracing some of the historical forces that have shaped the time/space continuum leading up to the manifesto. This would entail examining in large part why the SFM has been important in Italy, and how, following that, it managed to capture the public imagination by foregrounding politics with the pleasure of food and wine. This, in effect, would enunciate the political as well as the social and emotional factors that have urged the formation of the SFM. Furthermore, I want to suggest that the meeting in Paris was a pivoting point that signalled a commitment towards translating an Italian-specific practice and ideology onto the international stage. The manifesto and its idiosyncratic language, then, is more than a symbolic marking of the uneven grounds on which these changes take place. In large part, however, it is the historic specificity of the movement that has been brought to the attention of a broader audience outside Italy. This does not mean that it is the idea of 'Italy' as bucolic, picturesque, sensual, and exotic — as 'other' — that has taken hold, though through the promotion of the SFM abroad, there are elements that reflect this. Rather, I am suggesting that there are already in place understandings of a global/local entwinement that lean towards an ability by members to emulate the slow practices of Italy by recognising their relevance in their daily lives and resonating them in local contexts. Some brief consideration then must be given to the steps which have been taken, post-manifesto, to push forward the international agenda the SFM has set out. I provide, in the final section, a rough scenario in which the SFM has grown, emphasising especially the slow communities on the west coast of the USA.

2.2 Italy as 'entity'

What in the first place does it mean that something is Italian, or that it comes from Italy? It is necessary, I think, to consider what it means to call Italy an entity. For instance, there is already an established ambivalence regarding nations as nothing more than 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983) bound together more by geographical demarcation than a coherent, unified identity. Likewise, it has been suggested that there are "imagined Italies" (Dickie, 1996) too for there is no singular Italian sense of place (Capatti & Montanari, 2003; Parkins & Craig, 2006). Specifically,

there is supporting evidence of a deep-seated regionalism in Italian culture. One concerns a North/South divide. As early as the 14th century, there were already two distinct patterns of governance within Italy, what Putnam (1993: 130) calls the "celebrated Norman feudal autocracy of the South and the fertile communal republicanism of the North". Over the following centuries, including the autocratic period of the 17th century, this was largely distinguished by the vertical allegiance of *subjects* in the South compared to the horizontal integration of *citizens* in the North (ibid: 135; my emphasis). Because of these differing styles of governing, characteristics pertaining to what we might now call a civil society — that is, measures of kinship, trust and obligation – were often perceived to be stronger in the north than in the south.

In addition to the North/South divide, there was in the 19th century a surge in the number of organised groups called *associazionismo*. Referring to groups such as cooperatives and mutual aid societies, the former included producer and consumer associations as well as occupation-oriented ones in areas such as the military, commerce, trades and agriculture. The latter, while founded to alleviate the social/economic hardship of urban artisans and craftspeople, actually ended up not only providing across a social spectrum but also delivering a range of services which encompassed almost every aspect of daily living. Put together, these groups were considered to produce a "locally organised, underfunded (and) self help version of...a welfare state" (Putnam, 1993: 139). Once again, they were found to be more prevalent in the North. In 1904, for example, there were seven times more mutual aid societies in the northern Piedmont region than in Puglia in the south (ibid: 148). More broadly however, it is likely that they proliferated during the Risorgimento (or "resurgence") that had led to a political unification of Italy. Among other things, this was because the so-called 'new order' of a singular Italy had in place thinly-veiled attempts at eradicating associations that were reminiscent of earlier ages. It was highly plausible then that the strengthening of the *associazionismo* and its brand of organised sociability was in response to nationalist sentiments that were being promoted at this time.

In 1948, Post-World War II, a new Constitution allowed the direct election of regional governments. This mandate was quickly carried out in five regions which were threatened by separatism and ethnic problems but, for the remaining 85% of Italy's population, creation of their respective regions was delayed as the central administration was understandably reluctant to divest itself of political authority (Putnam, 1993: 19). In the two decades from 1950 to 1970 however, the astounding pace of social and economic transformations left politics and the government lagging far behind. Proponents of regionalism begin to number, arguing variously that it would raise levels of democracy by fostering citizen participation and responsiveness to local needs (populist), increase administrative efficiency (moderates), reduce regional inequalities (southerners), and via socioeconomic planning promote a newer way of doing politics (progressive technocrats) (ibid: 20). Bowing to this increasing pressure, the new regional governments 'opened for business' in 1972.

Was this institutional reform going to be a case of 'old wine in new bottles'? By and large, the accumulated evidence suggested otherwise, for it appeared that there was then:

> "a trend away from ideological conflict towards collaboration, from extremism towards moderation, from dogmatism towards tolerance, from abstract doctrine towards practical management, from interest articulation towards interest aggregation, from radical social reform towards "good government"".
>
> (Putnam, 1993: 36)

It seemed then that the bureaucratic mode of centralised government gave way to a regional approach that expressed, stylistically and pragmatically, elements of a civil society more strongly. The reform not only applied to changes at the scalar level of government but also across each department and occupational sector. An example pertinent to the SFM is the '616 decree' in 1977 whereby the Ministry of Agriculture transferred powers such that the legislative (regional) authority was made more powerful than the corresponding national body. A survey conducted later, in 1982, that charted attitudes of Italian voters and community leaders towards regional

autonomy found that 70% of the voters and 84% of the community leaders preferred this regional pre-eminence in agriculture (ibid: 53).

In a sense, governmental workings and the *associazionismo* came to settle more closely together in the interstices between national and local levels. With a mixture of formal and informal striations, intergovernmental politics resembled a "marble cake" rather than a "layer cake" model (Grodzins, 1966). That is, issues were not settled on a top-down or bottom-up fashion but rather welded in an unruly but ultimately more effectual fashion. Italy then has always been a "national place in historic flux" (Agnew, 2002: 3). In fact, it seems as if it is precisely this strong dose of apparently divisive regionalism that has kept Italy and the Italian identity intact. One, however, should not be too quick to reify the 'region' nor hold it as static. In common parlance for example, one often hears, as I did in my enquiries to the various people I met, declarations of "I'm not from here" even when the speaker's own place of residence was a mere five-minute drive away. Nestled within people then is a strong sense of localism on whose collective belief in *place* may be what spurs on this commitment to the regional. Thus it is recognised that in Italy, politics is qualitatively different in different regions because it depends on the quality of government at regional level. This, nonetheless, is affected by the strength of grassroots organisation and sanctioned, albeit more vaguely, by national policies. In addition to the region as a type of demarcated, political area, the emphasis on regions could be thought of more symbolically as an inter-meshing of local pronouncements of identity being made with regional and national voices. Regions therefore are more generally place differentials. In this sense, they are set up as a necessary concomitant to the social, economic, and political processes through which they are accrued and mediated (Agnew, 2002). Hence, they are constitutive of the layering and amplification (rather than disavowal) of identities and allegiances that are articulated in a given space and time.

2.3 Italian 'left'

Even given the predominance of regional politics as suggested above, it would be inaccurate to say that ideological conflict was completely absent. Indeed, perhaps

because of the ways in which politics was carried out, it should be incumbent that the following questions be asked: Which were the major political parties involved, and how did they use their varying political persuasions to sway outcomes? Thus far, I have only hinted at the affiliations within systems of governance and in the *associazionismo*. A detailed history is beyond the scope of this thesis. I want rather to chart some key transformations in the period following the fall of Mussolini's Fascist party in 1943, paying specific attention to the Italian 'left' — the group most strongly associated with the SFM.

On June 2 1946, Italy voted in a constitutional referendum to abolish the monarchy and become a republic. The historical preponderance of the autocratic monarchy in the south and communal republics in the North now gave rise to an antagonistic split in party lines between the political left and centre-right. This, as Parasecoli (2003) points out, was accentuated by the international context of the cold war. In this case, the party most associated with the left was the Italian Communist Party (PCI); on the other side was the Republican-oriented, Christian Democratic Party (DC) whose members drew from the Catholic Church. The inter-meshing of old and new politics, however, shifted the lines of allegiances. With the monarchy now gone, the south, used to hierarchic governments, took more readily to the formalised, republican regimes that were favoured by the aristocratic clans who still wielded some power and influence in society. Central and north Italy, drawing on their stronger civic roots and communal attitudes that have been historically present, tended to choose regional parties that, like the PCI, were more akin to display communitarian attitudes.

That is not to say that these switches in allegiances happened overnight, nor indeed that the divisions — regional as well as ideological — were as acute as they may appear. Rather, the suggestion here is that there were ready grounds on which the PCI was able to harness and maintain its "hegemonic role in Italian culture" (Paresecoli, 2003: 31). The *associazionismo* provided one such arena. As noted before, they were pervasive across the regions and, for different sectors of the population, served a variety of purposes. They were also mostly non-political. However, this

does not mean that they did not serve any latent political functions. One such prominent example relates to their successful collaborations with trade union movements (Putnam, 1993: 140), an activity that lies deep in the heart of labour politics and the PCI's own organisational agenda. Ironically, in Piedmont, a region of significance to the SFM, this is best highlighted by a collapse in trade union action that spurred the tighter integration of the PCI with these associations.

It is important to remember that the strength of the *associazionismo* is brought about by the intertwinement of the social as well as the economic. Indeed it has been said that prosperity in regions was arguably a consequence, as much as cause, of civic engagements (Putnam, 1993: 152). Support for the PCI in the north, for example, was tied very closely with the worker's movements in the most industrialised regions. This included the city of Turin, capital of the Piedmont region, in which the Fiat automobile company was a recognised pride of the city. Details of how the circumstances came to bear will be discussed later but suffice to say that in 1979, an event at the factory marked what many thought to be the end of class solidarity in Italy. Specifically, the already waning powers of the unions came to a halt when even after thirty-five days of strikes and picketing, twenty-three thousand of workers were, with the support of other department employees and subcontractors, dismissed from their jobs (Paresecoli, 2003: 32). Given their reduced efficacy in the realm of industrial action, the PCI had to find a way to garner support in these regions where they still had a majority vote. One such resource was the mutual aid associations as well as producer and consumer cooperatives that were catering to the vibrant and highly inclusive realm of agriculture. For instance, they were able to draw on the social bonds marked by collaboration and mutual solidarity of agricultural workers in this region, compared to that of dependency and exploitation of (primarily) peasant workers on large agricultural estates further down south (Tarrow, 1967). It was also around this time that post-war ideology regarding food security began to wane in significance. Instead, greater attention was paid by the consumer to regional food traditions and cultures and her/his corresponding role within, which resulted in the blossoming of consumer associations, of which the SFM came to number. In this way there was an increased sense — a sort of civic

consciousness perhaps — of the material in everyday life; an awareness that party politics could enjoin with non-political entities and work towards mobilising collective action.

2.3.1 Activity within the 'left'

The perseverance of the PCI to maintain its dominance in the region amidst all this spoke to its adaptive attitude within an evolving political landscape. Indeed, the necessity for these modifications was itself symptomatic of the changes that were taking place within the broader political 'left'. In the immediate period following the Cold War, the PCI had a strong identity: a definite role with clear objectives regarding its:

> "political methods (that) were based on programs, widespread organisation, and a coherent analysis of reality of the historical development of capitalism, all inspired by Marxist-Leninism in its Stalinist form"
>
> (Paresecoli, 2003: 30).

That is, working within a framework of democracy, the PCI was able to poise itself as a well-articulated political party as well as a revolutionary force whose explicit interest in the working class meant that it would always lie outside of and oppose the capitalist system. However, following the Soviet's invasion of Hungary in 1956 and Khrushchev's de-Stalinization of his Communist Party in the Soviet Union, there was diminishing support for this particular brand of communism. The PCI, obliged to rethink its ideology, decided to give up on revolution as a political strategy and instead focus on defending the constitution and new forms of democracy. This however did not prevent a crisis within the 'left' that developed in the late 1960s and well into the 70s, stemming from university students' demands that radical action be forged not within any rigidly developed democratic centralism, but rather, as a creative force that was inclusive and open to experimentation. This was in tandem with the wave of student protest movements taking place across Europe, and also appeared to reflect some of the concerns that brought about the hippie movement and opposition to the Vietnam War especially in the States. The Cultural Revolution

in China also set in motion a relationship that could, at best, be described as unease within the various factions of the Communist Party.

The situation was also not helped by public perception around this time that the PCI on the left and the DC as a centre-right party, although split ideologically, were not as distinct in their approach. It has been argued that they shared a "cathocommunist" attitude which united Catholic morality with Communist ideology (Paresecoli, 2003; also, R. Sardo, 2003 pers. comm.). For instance, the divorce of PCI's leader Palmiro Togliatti from his wife was denounced by the Catholic Church as well as members of his own party. Indeed, to speak of a 'red/white' distinction is sometimes misleading as their sociological roots and collective solidarity were similar (Putnam, 1993: 142). In any case, the antagonisms that were developing could be considered a display of dissatisfaction over universalising responses that were guiding politics in general, and left politics specifically. Increasingly, there was a recognition that a singular left, even if it were pedantically couched as being 'Marxist-Leninist in its Stalinist form' could not answer to the nuances necessitated by the various political commitments that had mushroomed from within. Indeed, the singular 'I' could no longer attend to the many 'We' of the contemporary left.

With the left's interests dissipated, four groups mirroring the major concerns emerged, namely: feminists, environmentalists, anarchists, and non-governmental communist organizations. In the latter group, the three most important ones were deemed to be the *Lotta Continua* (Continuous Struggle), *Potere Operaio* (Worker's Power) and *Il Manifesto,* a journal whose strong position led to a break with the communist party and later the formation of a newspaper of the same name in 1986 (Paresecoli, 2003: 32). Perhaps it was no mere coincidence that this breakdown occurred in this so-called "hedonistic era" (R. Sardo 2003 pers. comm.), a period where strong economic growth ushered in what came to be known within the PCI as 'the ephemeral' (see Leitch, 2003: 450). This referred to a period where popular culture took precedence in aspects relating to music, cinema, sports, but also food and wine, and as a result political commitment to the traditional left was low, much

to the consternation of older PCI members who considered these interests superfluous to the party's political project. Importantly, this was also a period where the print media such as *Il Manifesto*, among other means of communication, was increasingly utilised to access and mediate these aspects of popular culture in ways that played a more central role in galvanising public opinion. This however was not enough to maintain the agenda of the PCI in the public eye, and in 1991, it became the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), drawing itself closer to the New Left and altogether renouncing communism as its guiding ideal.

2.3.2 Food and wine-loving communists

It is one thing to fight for the workers and labourers of the land, it is quite another to take a seemingly sensual interest in the material produce of this land — the commodities donning the very veil of fetishism that they supposedly embody. And yet altogether discordant to then heartily enjoy (indulge) in this produce pleasurably. For is it not the case that the mental image of a bourgeois is often one of someone fat — physically, metaphorically – on whose character gluttony ranks as a sin?

The 'cathocommunist attitude' mentioned before was seen to extend this ideology to strongly suggest a sense of asceticism that was shared by both parties. What Paresecoli (2003: 33) refers to as the "pleasure-allergic left" then often viewed enjoyment as an excess that was theoretically impossible to cohere with a communistic agenda formed on "steady routine(s)" (Petrini, 2001: 20) This was akin perhaps to a systemic idea that excessiveness in food in one area implied its absence experienced elsewhere, or was perhaps an offshoot of the protestant ethic that was a driving force in many industrialising nations at this time. In either case, to desire to consume in this manner showed a lack of discipline of both body and political will: food had to be dealt with seriously. And yet, food *was* dealt with seriously, albeit in a manner of great discrepancy between public disavowals of indulging in its pleasures versus the clandestine enjoyment of the foods that regional Italy offered. As Petrini (see Paresecoli, 2003: 39) noted about the strange relationship between the Italian left and gastronomy:

"A private, almost secret approach to the little pleasures of a good table and, generally speaking, distance and lack of interest towards a sector of civil life that, extended to agro-alimentary production and its commercialization, involves more than a quarter of our population."

With a conviction that one could marry the pleasures of food with a Marxist take on historical materialism while attending to everyday civil life, like-minded comrades drawing from various parties aligned with the left got together to form the Free and Praiseworthy Association of the Friends of Barolo in 1980. This group grew from a network known as the ARCI, an acronym for the Recreation Association of Italian Communists. ARCI was the cultural arm of the left whose purpose it was to provide for the leisure (non-work related) pursuits of its members. Building on an idea of promoting the local produce of the land as a way of providing an alternative to the high-end eating instituted by, for instance, the *Academia Italiana della Cucina,* this group playfully referred to itself as *neo-forchettoni* (new epicures), *golosi democratici e antifascisti* (democratic and antifascist gluttons) and *nuovi edonisti* (new hedonists). Needless to say, their initial approach was frowned upon from both sides: the left who "looked down on us as a bunch of good-timers interested only in stuffing ourselves', and food/wine specialists who 'distrusted us left-wing gastronomes as incompetent intruders with an ideological agenda" (Petrini, 2001: 10). Nevertheless, they persisted, tweaking the group's direction to fill the very gap between the material and the ideological. In July 1986, ARCI gave autonomy to the formation of a *lega enogastronoimca* (league for food and wine), and from this a new fraternity called *Arcigola* was established. *Gola* in Italian means 'throat', but it can also variously mean an appetite for, or an enjoyment of, food as well as gluttony (Petrini, 2001: 6). Beyond etymology, perhaps it can also speak towards an excess — a 'spilling out' — of creativity in matters regarding food or, as Counihan (1999: 180) suggests, a voice as the central vehicle for self-expression in Italian cultural life. *Arcigola* then was the direct precursor to what became known as the Slow Food Movement.

This name *Arcigola* was also partly a tribute to the *La Gola* magazine. A monthly publication by an editorial cooperative in Milan that was in existence from 1982-1989, it was dedicated to epicurean philosophy encompassing the disciplines of sociology,

literature and anthropology. Though it was considered highfalutin and esoteric, it drew interest from isolated gourmets and a curious public who then took it upon themselves to follow up on their interests by attending tasting courses and social gatherings centred on local foods – a format that still lies at the centre of SF's practices. More generally, one cannot underestimate the role the print media plays within the SFM. Already, there is documentation that higher civic consciousness and vitality is closely associated with a region's local newspaper readership (Putnam, 1993: 92). In 1987, there appeared in the *Il Manifesto* newspaper a special supplementary inset dedicated to food and wine and there was born *Il Gambero Rosso*, a name which translates as 'The red prawn' but is also an allusion to the tavern in Italy's most fabled tale *Pinocchio*. Specifically, it denotes the place where the cat and the fox con the puppet Pinocchio of his gold coins. The supplement's mission then was to "protect Pinocchio's real life counterparts — innocents abroad as well as trusting consumers at home — from padded hospitality bills, lumpy beds, gruff service, watery wine, and mediocre food" (Paresecoli, 2003: 33). Whereas *La Gola* was a few thousand copies in circulation, *Il Manifesto* and its magazine supplement had a distribution numbering thirty-five thousand copies. *Il Gambero Rosso* then provided *Arcigola* with a largely sympathetic and extensive audience to whom they could air their views.

By the 1990s, interest in food and wine was beginning to stamp itself in public life, with the then Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema, a Leftist Democrat, frequently inviting famous chefs to cook for official receptions. As well, a much published account has the Minister of Culture missing the opening opera season at *La Scala* to attend, together with many left intelligentsia, an annual gala dinner organised by *Il Gambero Rosso*. It is following such accounts that the founders, while never denouncing their roots or prior involvement in Communist and/or left orientations, seek to actively re-configure the popular imagination of an ascetic, static and opposing Marxist stance towards one that is generous, flexible and embracing. This has often been attributed to the vision of one particular person, Carlo Petrini, SF's founder.

2.4 Carlo Petrini

Carlo Petrini's own intellectual and personal biography is formed within the milieu of left activism, especially in ARCI circles and latterly, as part of a critique of the PCI (Leitch, 2003; R. Sardo 2003 pers. comm.). Born in 1948 to a teacher and an artisan who already had strong connections with the region, Petrini grew up with an interest in theatre and radio, and in his early years hosted the Radio Bra 'Red Waves', one of Italy's first radical-left pirate stations. He studied sociology at the University of Trento, notable for its trainings in the 1970s of many leftist leaders of extra-parliamentary groups (Leitch, 2003: 449), and became involved in a group whose particular slant was towards gastronomy. A self-taught journalist, he began writing on the cultural and political aspects of food for *La Gola,* and then later writing for newspapers, including not only *Il Manifesto,* but the popular current affairs weekly *L'espresso* as well as *La Stampa,* widely distributed throughout Europe and with a readership of 356 000, is the 3rd most read daily in Italy (BBC News, 2006).

In recounts of the legendary story that kick- started SF, it is inevitable that Carlo Petrini is often mentioned as the main instigator for he is the name, and face, that many people associate SF with. One however should not underestimate the people and contexts that ably support him. In the former group is counted first and foremost: friends. These are variously the people whom he grew up with and/or knew in association with his role in Friends of Barolo and later *Arcigola.* For example, the vice-president of SF, Giulo Colomba, was a senator of the Communist party when Petrini was a member of the local extra-left party (R. Sardo pers. comm. 2003), and Rossana Rossanda, the former culture minister of the PCI, also has a guiding role in the SFM. Within the journalistic field, a number of founding members originate from the editorial and contributing board of the *Il Gambero Rosso.* Prominent among them are Stefano Bonilli, a reporter for *Il Manifesto* from 1971-182 and founding editor of *Il Gambero Rosso* who was one of the signatories of SF's Italian Manifesto (Paresecoli, 2003), and Alberto Capetti, a food historian of Italy and frequent contributor to the Slow magazine, who was previously founding editor of *La Gola.*

It is evident though that Petrini's own passion and engagement, together with what some people refer to as his charisma is carried very strongly through the SFM. Folk festivals, for instance, had been inscribed as an important part of daily Italian life and in the 1970s, as part of *Arcigola*, Petrini had organised a folk music festival in Bra that grew to be the biggest in Europe (R. Sardo 2003 pers. comm.). Indeed, the revivalist mode of the 1990s has witnessed a re-engaging of 'rustic' and 'rural' Italy and its 'authentic' festivals and traditions, emphasising an Italian regional identity that has found expression within a post-modern Italian imaginary (Bennetts, in Parkins & Craig, 2006: 101-2). To bring together experience with food politics at this particular juncture has been Petrini's visionary forte. Close to home at the headquarters in Bra, many speak of him fondly, and especially of his energy in pushing radical (and mainstream) boundaries to effect present and future food landscapes. Further afield his popularity is similar, surprising especially in English-speaking countries given that he is unable to speak English and relies mostly on translators when addressing such audiences. Overall, there is often an alluding to his *knack* and *touch* which suffuse SF, allowing things to be international and interesting at the same time.

2.4.1 Idea no. 1 — following the wine route

The way to enliven the body is via its blood. For SF and Petrini, no step has been as decisive as that taken to ground a philosophical and pragmatic stance using the 'French terroir strategy'.

To reach the SFM's headquarters in Bra, one has to travel the edges of the Langhe wine-growing district and observe its life-giving properties. This area may be home to the important Barolo wine, but the culture and heritage of the region is arguably sustained by the wine production of smaller producers that is more akin to traditional wine-making mainly for personal consumption. In 1986 however, this latter activity was under threat when the Ciravegna firm in Cuneo, near Bra, was found to perform an illegal cost-cutting measure of diluting wine with methyl alcohol, the result of which were the deaths of nineteen people and poisoning of hundreds others throughout Northern Italy (Petrini, 2001: 41). The region's social and economic well being, already tenuously held between peasant farming and the

mechanised efficiency of modern agriculture in both wine and food production, appeared to break down. A question was laid before the *Arcigola* committee: Could the Langhe be to Piedmont what the Côte d'Or is to Burgundy?

By this reference was meant the wine region of Burgundy, which itself in the period of the 1860s and 1930s, had to develop a system to save their industry. Faced at that time with mildew and phylloxera, not to mention wars with England and competition from cheaper wine countries like Algeria, grape-growers had to graft French vines onto hardy American root stock to ensure the survival of the fruits and consequently, their wines (Lauden, 2004: 8). To maintain the 'French wine' distinction however, they argued that it was not the vines per se but the terroir which made French wines what they were. Briefly, this meant that it was the local environment — soil, climate, situated techniques — that gave the wines their character. In time to come, this strategy was so successful that it gave rise to a concomitant interest in the food (products, restaurants) that was *of* these respective regions.

It appears mundane now to speak about the twin attractions of food and wine but in 1990, just prior to the revivalism of 'rural' Italy and the mass appeal of food and wine tourism, *Arcigola* was able to pull together the main elements that made the French terroir strategy a success and transpose them onto their local regions. More than that, by giving food equal, if not more, importance they were able to throw open the regions' doors to a broader public while supporting both the food and wine economies. The French terroir strategy was a conduit to a whole array of ideas and practices that could be legitimately considered within the movement, or as Renato Sardo (2003 pers. comm.) puts it, viewed through "SF eyeglasses". Perhaps it is more accurate to say: wine animates, but food gives life.

2.4.2 Idea no. 2 — building the Editore

This line of thinking has carried on through to the Editore, a collaborative effort between SF and *Gambero Rosso*. Editore, in effect, is the not-for-profit (as opposed to SF International's non-profit status) publishing arm of the movement. It is no secret,

for instance, that the financial resources that the Editore generates allow for creative and new directions within the SFM to be pursued (O. Reviglio 2003, pers. comm.).

The consideration of terroir is the binding philosophy of the two types of guides that Editore produces. The first, which deals with matters regarding wine, is a conscious step away from an absolute point system used internationally in wine tasting and grading towards a 'three glass' (*tre bicchieri*) system. This latter method is considered to more generously signpost the typicality of the wine to the region rather than say, an outright ranking, but is paradoxically more precise in its non-technical language, and its impartiality shown to labels as all wines are blind tasted. The second regards food and deals specifically with a group of eateries that are collectively referred to as 'osterie'. Unlike the Michelin-stars which were increasingly the benchmark by which restaurants were judged, the focus here was on a range of eatery types — trattorie with home cooking, small urban eateries, taverns with a food menu, small family-run restaurants in the country, wine bars offering hot dishes, farm-run eateries — as everyday, accessible places that, notwithstanding social strata, are able to provide "simple service, a welcoming atmosphere, good-quality wine, and moderate prices" (Petrini, 2001: 52; see also Miele & Murdoch, 2002). In its usage of a range of judges from diverse backgrounds, it was also held as a particularly democratic and impartial guide. Pulling together the SF network, the onus was on members or leaders to nominate their various osterie. In this way, the guides were able to reach a wider public in ways that a left-leaning newspaper, however influential, may not have been able to. All this was done without so much as a SF logo attached to any of these products (though for the osteries, a year-to-year sticker was dispensed if they made it into the guide), yet the mark of the guides undoubtedly reflected the ethos of the SFM.

2.5 Slow Food Politics

The political precedence of the movement and the people involved makes its difficult to imagine a future scenario which does not take into consideration contemporary political issues in the varying slow food scenarios. I suggest here three elements that sway the formations of this particular brand of politics:

Firstly I want to speak of a politics of sentiment. As Raymond Williams (1976) has asserted, there are 'structures of feeling' which may urge one towards acting and behaving in certain ways due to what is currently present in our lives. Combining this with anthropological accounts that deal with the role of poetry in society (see for example, Abu-Lughod, 1999; Benavides 2006), I want to suggest that feelings and emotions have coincided with evocative words and their corresponding imaginative devices to produce among a group of people a sense of dismay, dissatisfaction and desire to do something about their circumstances. Working towards what is pleasing and satisfying then has been a visceral as much as an intellectual response. It has paid attention to the art of living as it has to the economics of livelihood. This sentiment has been advanced by the SFM as a collective feeling that sways events and shapes their outcomes. To Chrzan (2004: 129):

> "The phrase "slow food" strikes a chord among the public not because it is the name of an organization but because it reflects a series of desires, interests and concerns that began with Rachel Carson's Silent Spring....and continues to build through widespread consumer agitation and action".

This collectivity is not all the same: in action, as in feeling, it means the discovery of "allies who think alike while respecting one another at a distance" (Petrini, 2001: 18). Agitation that may be borne of a feeling of anger should be channelled towards expressing a joyful alternative. Perhaps as pleasure, especially one not forged as 'excess' but as broadening out choices to learn and live differently.

Secondly, the persuasion of politics is enhanced by good ideas. Some of this has had to do with 'gaps' between what was lacking and what was needed. Otherwise, it had to do with, in some measure, transposing what was already known or done to better effect a present situation. In the period of the 1980s when SF (as *Arcigola*) was being formed, there was an active bringing together of the hedonistic concerns such as pleasure in food and wine in ways that could mobilise people — *citizens* — in an area with a history of plentiful *associazionismo,* strong civic consciousness and more suitable regional levels of government to perform the necessary duties. It is also no small matter that this was carried out by popular and influential founding figures of the movement who had credible biographies, coherent personal politics and much

first-hand experience in bringing together the power of collective action. In effect, these people were able to do a variety of things concomitantly. They were able to connect old and new publications by using similar terminologies and popular discourse to portray a consistent line of argument; introduce new ideas in *Il Manifesto* which although not very widely distributed, was read by everyone who mattered, as part of the briefing material that all industry managers, state officials, and politicians found on their desk everyday (Paresecoli, 2003); draw on the productive and healthy agricultural ties between consumers and producers by giving similar attention to food and wine as well as to the everyday meals of the osterie; and tweak the pertinent ideas of the French terroir strategy for the purpose of their immediate region, but with an eye towards its more widespread application.

Thirdly, I want to suggest that this is a politics of timeliness. By this I do not mean the issue of time as a measure of speed (fast/slow) or consciousness: this will be dealt with in a later chapter. Rather, the simple assertion here is that the growth of the movement has in large part been down to good timing, and especially moments in which the proponents have been opportunistic to seize them as such. Given a connection of the SFM with communist leanings, it was just as well that the official birth of the international movement coincided with the fall of the Berlin Wall, set already in an era that more widely accepted 'left' groups and did not view them with as much suspicion. Indeed, having already begun to adopt broader left-oriented tones and policies themselves, it could be argued that SF served as a refreshing counterpoint to which, given the neo-liberal climate of many Anglo-Western countries, many disenchantments and dissatisfactions could be pleasurably directed. This, afterall, is presently a time where the 'left' has been as international as it is disparate. In general, the political ground that the SFM straddles and gently asserts has been constantly able to modulate itself within a wider political realm that has, correspondingly, held an audience sympathetic to their causes.

Last and on more tangible grounds, the grasp and understanding SF has of journalism and the print media has been advantageous. The *Gambero Rosso* supplement that still appears in *Il Manifesto* has been able to chart, and continually

improve upon the contemporary aims of the movement. This has come at an important juncture where readership in newspapers was still being maintained as digital media was just beginning to burgeon. The weekly column that Petrini writes for *L'Espresso* and *La Stampa*, together with the yearly wine and osterie guides, has also served to keep the SFM consistently in the public's eye. Lastly, employing the French terroir strategy initially as a more or less commonsensical and intuitive way of conducting a region's affairs has led to an approach that has settled in well with the subsequently more bureaucratic implementation of the laws pertaining to controls over place names in wines and food, known in French as *appellation contrôlée*. This strategy, which also promoted the support of local food systems and its implicit trust networks, was a ready foil when the international food scares relating to mad cow disease and dioxin in chickens, to name just two, came around.

2.6 Manifesto manifestations

It seems apt at this point to revisit the SF Manifesto. Parkins and Craig (2006: 52) suggest that while a deconstructive critique of it may reveal simplistic and superfluous statements that can be easily knocked down (see for instance, Gaytán, 2004; Chrzan, 2004), to do only that would fail to engage with the *genre* of the manifesto, paying insufficient attention to its history, conventions and thus its complexity. Of the conventions, three that they identify and speak of are as follows: a selected and condensed version of history which has led to the present moment of crisis; enumeration of grievances and demands, explicating a struggle between "the empowered and disempowered, or between the corrupt and the sanctified; or between usurpers and rightful heirs" (Lyon, 1999: 15); and usage of declarative rhetoric which directly challenges the enemy while uniting its audience in a call to action (Parkins & Craig, 2006: 53-4).

The SF manifesto, specifically, can be seen as a testament that ties political activism to the love for good food and wine. In an ironic link to Marinetti's (1932) Futurist Manifesto, conceived at the onset of modernity and advocating the playful abandonment of tradition to the aesthetics of food, SF picks up on its thematic spirit (in this case, the need for 'slow' in 'fast' modernity) as well as the necessity to pay

attention to the pleasurable tactility of taste. In aligning with Marx and Engel's (1848) famously left-oriented, The Communist Manifesto, it takes seriously the call to arms against the industrial homogenization (repression) of taste. More proactively, it takes the side of those who promote taste, and the invocation to foreground (not veil) the labour processes that go into producing the sensuality of food matter. Bringing these concerns together, the manifesto matters, or makes itself matter because it calls for change. It matters not unto itself but rather as a signal of practices that have passed, of intentions that are made in the present, and the trajectories that the SFM might take in the future. The suggestion then is that it is central to the movement because it has efficacy in guiding everyday affairs: it aims to give direction to a social movement that is transformative of, and within, the everyday.

The ideas for the SFM International were brought together and presented, anew, in one place: Paris. And though that may seem a spatially discordant site to launch the SFM, there are a few plausible reasons for this. One is that Paris is considered the gastronomic capital of the world. Another is that the venue of the Opéra Comique pays homage to the manner in which this organisation had been formed: somewhat tongue-in-cheek, never formalistic, and in a slightly playful spirit for, as is argued, to be serious in intention does not necessitate seriousness of delivery. Finally, Paris, rather than anywhere in Italy, sent a clear signal that it is finally ready to step outside itself. There is a sense then that the international manifesto was 'left' in Paris (R. Sardo 2003 pers. comm.) to aid the creation of international convivia on their own local terms and agendas, rather than as offshoots of an Italian organisation.

And so the message of the manifesto is this: SF can happen anywhere. If it is engrained in a left food politics that is disparate, it is also one that is multiple in intention and in ways of expressing itself. Metaphorically, the manifesto is the place where SF takes place. As the basis and strength of a grassroots organisation, this can be tremendously liberating. Conversely, it also sounds the warning bells that no place is by itself unique and a standalone success. It needs, through SF, to make connections and strengthen its own aims by strengthening that of the organisation.

This then calls attention to the activities that embody these multiple sites, the concrete steps taken to effect the manifesto.

2.7 SF Activities

Any agenda that is set from within this loosely-formed and somewhat discretionary manifesto allows for interpretation in many different ways. There appears, however, three modi operandi that facilitate these activities. The first of this concerns education, as a mode of instruction to which knowledge about SF, and its accompanying ethos, is dispensed. The second relates to the mode of discovery, which entails creativity in ways of advancing the philosophy of SF, as well as substantive addition to the knowledge base of SF. What follows from these two then is the mode of exchange, as a way of communicating the corporeal and incorporeal SF elements. It will be to these three areas that I now turn.

In 1998, a book entitled Speaking, Doing, Tasting was published as a small-scaled initiative to develop the school curriculum in Italy (Petrini, 2001:71-76). While it is not one of SF's better known projects, it represented a culmination of the various philosophies underpinning its educative aspect to date. Systematically, it dealt with the techniques involved in awakening, and then reordering our five perceptive senses. The method was didactic, but it was centred squarely on the pleasure principle — the joy one could get from knowing how to use one's senses, handling and cooking raw produce/ingredients, and in the classroom scenario, rediscovering the conviviality of doing it all. Regarding the title, it is best to consider the three adverbs in continual conversation with each other than in any particular causal relationship. Speaking is as much about enunciating the taste in descriptive and scientifically evaluative terms as it is about the narratives that one tells another of the social history of a certain food or food practice. Doing is the pro-active response to 'getting your hands dirty' in food, in sharp contrast to mediated or vicarious food experiences as often advanced in popular media. Tasting is the complex entwinement of the cultural, social, sensorial and historical factors of the collective and individual body. Together, they speak towards the forging of a "new moral

imperative" (ibid: 71) on the food landscape; towards a practised demeanour that is to affect one's overall attitude to life.

The clearest portrayal of this ethos thus far has been in the Masters of Food course, a module-based certificate programme run throughout Italy to showcase each region's strengths on twenty thematic areas in which taste figures largely (A. Arossa 2003 pers. comm.), as well as the University of Gastronomic Sciences which opened in 2003 in Pollenza with great anticipation to an international student body, and whose 3-year tertiary structure caters to a range of professionals in the food and wine sector roughly divided between journalism and business/marketing specialisations (V. Manganelli 2003 pers. comm.). In both cases, the approach is similar to that carried out on the convivia level itself, albeit the latter more informally.

The creative aspect of advancing and tweaking the movement aims must not be underestimated, for its processual nature is as much a declaration of its youthfulness as of its inclusiveness of wide-ranging interests. Petrini knows this too, and in 1996 he founded the Ark of Taste — a biblical analogy to Noah's ark — to "save the planet of flavours' from the deluge of the 'flood of standardization" (Petrini, 2001: 85). In essence, it constituted a recording of plant and animal species that were in danger of being written out of our eco-food system. This idea was followed up with the Presidium project, where ark products which still had a small group of producers and economic viability would be provided with financial assistance. From 2000, an 'Oscar-like' award has been given out every year to an individual or group recognising outstanding contribution which benefits biodiversity in the agro-industrial field. In 2003, a separate non-profit foundation was set up, with the regional government of Tuscany, taking all these initiatives under its wing as an agglomerated and directed aspect of SF. All this is to illustrate the dynamism of the movement, but also its ability to create new ideas and bring them to fruition as a prominent part of SF without necessarily overdrawing resources from the core of the movement. The onus then is on the convivia to find products in each particular region to add to the ark, as well as put forward viable projects to be considered for the presidium. On an everyday basis, however, many have found interesting and

ingenious ways to conduct their events. Activities may involve visits to far-flung dairy farms, foraging for wild mushrooms, newly-discovered perry makers, collaborations with art galleries in celebration of the sensory, word-of-mouth ethnic restaurants using their own garden produce etc. The lively, independent activities of these events add to the collectively creative mix of the movement.

Exchanges wrought in conviviality between members of a convivia, or producers and consumers during a SF event are very much alive and well, but so far this has not been at the expense of 'touching base' with its Italian roots. Bra remains very much at the epicentre of the movement, not so much dictating convivia activities but, to varying levels of autonomy, as a supporting mechanism and/or coordinator. It is hence a **node** of exchange, enacting itself as a visible platform for the various convivia' activities , the little-known producers and advocates who champion 'slow food' and is, correspondingly, often the first port of call for journalists. There is a press office to take care of year-round questions as well as prepare press kits and be present at events held locally and internationally, communicating to members or a broader public any of the, say, top five ideas of the year already agreed upon earlier by the SF board (A. Abbona 2003 pers. comm.).

Mostly though, what counts as exchange takes place as dissemination of written material. Members receive SLOW, a quarterly magazine that covers somewhat esoteric food themes (as opposed to recipes or food-related travels) and writing peppered with well-chosen photographs (as opposed to food photography). Pitched perhaps just below the tone of an academic food journal, its English edition, which is one among five other languages it publishes in, is sometimes considered tough-going due to translation and turn-of-phrase differences. In my interview with SF members, responses ranged from shudders to loving it. Most, however, agree that its 'Italian flavour' keeps them connected to the movement's origins. In the case of the UK and USA, a national newsletter is produced that is considered complementary to the magazine, giving practical information about events and happenings which are more tailored to local settings. It is therefore also a **mode** of exchange, a vehicle that is arguably in its most concentrated form when the two, alternating biennial events of

'Cheese' and 'Salone del Gusto' come along. The former is rustic; spread out along the cobbled streets of Bra, the whole town is a marketplace revelling in informal encounters between cheese-makers and consumers, engaging the senses of touch and taste as the basis for conversation, and located in an outdoor environment with the changeable weather only adding to its charm. The latter is urbane; set in the old fiat factory in Turin, this convention centre in 2002 played host over the course of five days to 138 000 people and some 2200 accredited journalists (O. Reviglio 2003 pers. comm.). Producers showcase their wares along thematic 'streets', international presidium products are represented, and in addition to some 300 or so hour-long taste workshops that happen in conjunction with the actual fair, dinner dates (often featuring degustation menus) take place well into the wee hours of the morning. It is usual practice that a new SF initiative is launched here (as Ark of Taste was in 1996, the Presidium in 1998, SF Awards for the defense of biodiversity in 2000, University of Gastronomy in 2002, and Terra Madre, a forum for some 5000 farmers from around the world, in 2004) and added to the collective agenda of following Salone.

2.8 SFM outside Italy

Much of the earlier workings of the SFM outside Italy were peculiar to specific contacts and local formations, rather than reflective of the strategic approach that SF International has now taken in regard to the aforementioned programmes. In Spain, for instance, membership in the mid-1990s swelled to over two thousand, with much activity including bringing together local food product sponsorships as well as compiling a wine guide, but when the core organising group went away, the organisation there took a downward plunge. In Germany, SF has traditionally been aligned with green ecologists known for their fundamentalist attitudes, a subset of which was a breakaway group enjoined with SF in an 8-year legal battle over the use of the official logo which SF finally won (R. Sardo 2003 pers. comm.). In France, Switzerland and Austria, the organisations have gone through lull periods. And in Japan even till recently, people were mistakenly conceiving of SF as being solely about the Italian cuisine, though it must said that this was not unique to Japan alone. In some respects then, it has been difficult to consolidate membership alliances as

some convivia, and even national offices, operated as if they were exclusively local organisations. Insofar as these convivia continue to identify with SF though, their differences, however many, attest to the processual and diverse routes that the movement has taken; almost without exclusion, this appears the very strength and weakness of the SFM.

At the time I was about to conduct fieldwork, SF International was just taking off more prominently in both in UK, but especially in the USA. Some initial impressions were formed regarding the SFM abroad, and they are what they are — generalised observations. This however was the scenario as I perceived it to be taking place:

The 'Forager' convivium that I was assigned to was based in London, though at that time I was residing in Bristol. This is significant because though there were a few convivia spread out across the country, London was a metonym for the UK. In some sense, SF in the UK stood at the intersection of roads. In London itself, convivia were coming together in aid of a unified front that could be presented to the public. These meant a few things. One, that as a non-profit and voluntary organisation with no historical ties in the UK, it had to reveal its politics in what was becoming a contentious food policy arena in the country. This meant that even the idea at that time of sharing an office with 'Sustain', an alliance of food and farming that was perceived as having centre-left politics, was felt to have ramifications of how SF would be viewed by the general public, as this would affect the type of members it attracted as well as the projects that ensued. Two, that despite its wariness of close associations with particular groups, it was working with 'Food from Britain', a market development consultancy that as a joint industry/government initiative had received sizeable funding from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as part of the foot and mouth recovery plan. This was especially helpful as the representation of forty-six products at the upcoming Salone del Gusto in 2002 was going to be the largest after Italy (C. Lawson 2002 pers. comm.). Three, that while its aesthetic dimension was not immediately discernible, it was a pleasant foil to projects such as 'Countryside Alliance' and the more instrumental approach in its 'Eat the View' campaign (J. Murdoch 2002 pers. comm.). Fourth, that while SF

gained exposure through a couple of well-known chefs (for example, Jamie Oliver and Rick Stein), the movement by and large was less associated with the restaurant world, and more associated with the tradition produce that the UK had to offer. Finally, that because the London convivium was called upon to run a whole gamut of affairs that needed concise and intensive planning, the bulk of the jobs fell to a handful of highly competent but nonetheless overstretched volunteers within the group. With members having to travel from different parts of London to meet, time scarcity was an issue, as were minor logistic issues such as the road toll that had just come into place.

How is this different to the USA? In both the UK and USA the movement finds itself entering nations where highly sophisticated, but also highly industrialised food systems are in place, where post World War II food expenditure as a percentage of total budget has been falling, and percentage of people shopping from an increasingly few consolidated supermarkets chains is rising. In reality, these broad strokes are not false but may depict specific locations poorly, for regional and sub-regional differences are vast, each convivium even in the same city may be very dissimilar, and the level and kind of SF activity carried out is varied.

Firstly, in the USA, an already established New York office, albeit with only three permanent staff, coordinates nationwide agenda such as the Heritage Turkey project that promotes the use of slowly-grown and free-range traditional breeds of turkey for thanksgiving dinners. Set up after a smattering of convivia nationwide were founded, the office has been able to push new directions (such as the SF New York and San Francisco food guides) while being able to rely on extant events to sustain the level of activity and act as promotional tools to new members. In this sense too it mattered less the physical distance of the New York office from cities such as Portland (home to the first convivium), Seattle, Vancouver or California. My mentioning of these places is not coincidental though, as well-known writers such as Eric Schlosser of Fast Food Nation fame and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Michael Pollan have observed, more attention has been paid to specific locations in the USA. There certainly appears to be disproportionately more activity especially in

California. Here, the state as a quantity-producing food basket of America meets with intensity a seemingly innate food culture focused on quality and which SF has all but too easily slipped in to. There are a few possible reasons why that may be so. One is that the Berkeley, which has the highest concentration of convivia per city population in the USA, has traditionally sat in the East Bay of California as the hotbed of counter-cultural politics, with a loose conglomerate of left-oriented people who would be sympathetic to SF's causes. Another is that SF itself was not an impetus for this alignment, for in the persona of Alice Waters — founder of the 'Californian cuisine', food activist, chef of the famous Chez Panisse restaurant, integral advocate in the formation of farmers' markets, originator of the schoolgardens project and now Vice President of SF's International President's Committee — there is already a larger-than-life presence that is symbolic of a certain attitude towards the food culture of the region. That is to say that Alice Waters herself is part of a wider network of cross-cutting food histories and philosophies wherein any place resonance there is already a factoring in of the dynamism of migrant populations and ways of embracing food that reflect the mindsets of food-interested people. So in a place where a whole range of cuisines and grown products are available, the emphasis is not so much on questions of tradition, and more about the ideology surrounding the preparations of these cuisines, and the quality (for example, freshness) of the produce. In this sense, SF refines itself as a 'niche' movement by sitting amidst similar and competing claims already present in approaches regarding for example, organic food and local foods. With organic food in general, they may agree with some of its environmental concerns, but less with the practices that necessitate year-long greenhouse agriculture carried out on a large-scale 'farm'. With local food, they may not fully agree that local is always 'better' in terms of flavour, but may agree in principle with its community-supported agriculture and its ability to reduce food miles. SF then may be the new kid on the block, but it sits amongst practices of people who are already, confidently, carrying out their quotidian, slower food routines.

2.9 Conclusion

It has been important to explicate a particular historical context of politics and social life in Italy to glean SF's particular stances and attitudes, as well as what is meant when reference is made to the Italian spirit or ethos of SF. There is shown however enough in its philosophical and pragmatic ideas for its translation outside the country. I have tried to show that all this movement, in the many senses of the word, can be pivoted on a seemingly superfluous manifesto, which in effect has been able to propel action to cause, and cause to action in a manner becoming of a vibrant, humorous and serious movement all rolled into one. It follows a line of thinking that since food is a necessity, one might as well think socially, environmentally, and economically, as individuals and as a collective, what it is that is held in the hand and put in the mouth. At the very least, it allows for an agreement with SF's philosophies that affirms that what one is doing is at least not harmful, and at most, life-changing. The issues herein that have led up to the writing of the manifesto, and the subsequent activities that are now guided under the official banner of the SFM are the guiding principles that will be examined further on in the thesis.

Chapter 3: Methodology

> Our address is _. We are actually in Knightsen, but there is no mail delivery out of Knightsen. _ is a private road off of Byron Highway. It may show as a dotted or broken line on your map. We had a visitor drive from Los Angeles with a computer map and it was quite good.
>
> They should send you on Highway 24 to 680 North, to 242 and then Highway 4 East. You will go through Antioch. About 2 miles east of the Hillcrest exit, Highway 4 will exit. Be sure to get off. If you find yourself going over a toll bridge you have gone too far. You will find yourself on a road that is Main Street of Oakley. It is also Highway 4. You will drive through Oakley, several shopping plazas and the road will narrow to just two lanes, with a winding bit. Mind the posted speed limits. Oakley is a notorious speed trap. The town makes half their income on speeding tickets! The next light after the sharp winding turns is Cypress. Turn left there. Go over the railroad tracks and past the next traffic signal (Sellers Avenue) to the flashing light at Knightsen Avenue and turn right. Knightsen Avenue will cross the railroad tracks and then curve to the left in a turn. There is another road that keeps on going, but follow the arrows and turn left. You will soon drive through the town Knightsen – a tiny store, the post office, a bar (!) and a small boat motor yard. You will come to a Stop sign at Delta Road. Turn left on Delta Road. You will cross the railroad tracks again and drive past the Knightsen School on the right. About a mile past the school you will see a yard with dozens of fire hydrants in the front and a sign — Kicking Back Ranch. Just a few houses past that house is Byron Highway, turn right. Stay on Byron Highway for about a mile. Just before the railroad tracks (look for the R/R X sign) there is a small street that goes only to the left. That is _. There really is no sign visible from that direction. Be sure to signal a left turn especially if anyone is behind you. People drive like idiots out in the country on the weekends. Be very careful because people coming from the other direction come flying over the railroad crossing. If you go over the railroad tracks you have missed our road. Once on our road you will drive about 1/4 mile and the road will take a sharp right turn. After the turn you will go past three houses. You will drive past 190 with a bright green mail box on the left. The next driveway is ours. Turn left. There is a house in the front. Stay on the driveway and go straight back about 400 feet to the gate and honk your horn and we will come open the gate for you.
>
> (Anne, 17 July 2003)

This was an email sent to me detailing directions to visit Anne, a farmer who breeds the heritage-listed Navajo-Churro sheep. En route, I figured that if I arrived intact and not having lost my way, I could proclaim myself to be a true Geographer entering the field. If not, I could probably just arrive unfashionably late and fumble my way though the apologies regarding unfamiliarity with foreign roads and the like. What started off as mild bemusement with an apparently long-winded email became less facetious as I realised that this road trip was beginning to feel more and more analogous to my own research 'journey'. For it seemed the case that as I travelled

through the field, there were signposts to confirm the way forward or a necessity to change direction. Sometimes the reverse gears were engaged when I was unsure what route I might take, when things were dropped (unintentionally) along the way, or when I needed advice from someone how to 'get there'. As such, I want to chart my methodological journey along these highways and by-ways as sequential twists and turns that, to me at least, conforms best to the ways one performs research.

I will start by explaining the guiding ontology that informs the multi-method by which I have carried out my fieldwork. This will be followed by the framework that was used to 'get into' the research arena which necessarily took place in an 'expanded field' of mobile cultures. I will then highlight the methodology that was carried out with three main groups of people within the SFM — its organisers, members and food producers, notwithstanding the sometimes-slippage in these group identities. Seeking to explicate further what it is these methods actually 'do', I look to detail the encounters that took place by interrogating the dialogues that ensued, as well as the non-dialogical communication whose terms of expression were interrogated via the axis of art/artfulness. There is attendance then to the performativity of fieldwork, and related to that, some comments will be made on the embodied aspects that drive this actual research.

3.1 "We are actually in Knightsen, but there is no mail delivery..."

And so the journey begins. Where does one embark on 'fieldwork'? But even before one starts to question where or perhaps when, there is a need to consider not only what one wants to ask about, and indeed, why you are asking what you are. This, in effect, could not be set in stone as a journey often implies, as was the case in my research, dynamic knowledges and circumstances that would effect the kinds and emphasis of the questions asked. Overall, it can be said that the questions posed were guided by an interest to solicit information regarding some driving issues within the SFM that I was curious about, and underscoring that, that these interesting facets of information actually said something about the way people 'do slow'. And that this is important because they directly affect not only the consumption and production of

the SFM, but also the various socio-spatial enactments that intersect with the politics and economics of our worldly foodscapes.

"There is no mail delivery". There is, in other words, no cookie-cutter method of conducting fieldwork research, but there are certainly better (and worse) ways to do so. Baxter and Eyles (1997), for example, suggest that fieldwork that utilises interview techniques should be rigorous, determined by its own credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. With that, I think, should be balanced what Bacon (1979) calls "felt-sensing" — the emotions, intuition and senses that one carries into a research agenda. This may improve with practical experience, but failing extensive fieldwork exposure, some character of candour (Madison, 2005), common-sense, curiosity, naïve earnestness and spontaneity will also go some distance. For even with careful planning, it seems as if I often forged a methodology on the run, utilising an ad-hoc combination of interviewing, observing, participating as was deemed possible and suitable for the given situation; talking while walking (Anderson, 2004), writing field notes in haste to capture a memorable moment, observing activities-in-motion, masticating and conversing food matter, reading and commenting on SF-related materials so presented to me. Indeed, conducting a sort of ethnographically-inspired research as I went along.

Given that the SFM has more than eighty-thousand members spread over a hundred countries (SF map and fieldwork locations: Appendix A), conducting research 'anywhere' was always going to be a possibly justifiable 'somewhere'. Given my being-in-place convenience, I started to research the SFM in England, paying attention to the London convivium which, run by the SF governor of the UK, was my first port of call. London was subsequently the place that I most regularly caught the train to attend events — tastings, press conferences, and a host of other activities aimed at increasing the awareness of SFM. There was also a sense that one had to visit the 'core', the city of Bra in Italy that started it all. It houses the headquarters of SF and at the time of research, employed a hundred people of the town's total population of just under twenty-eight thousand (http://en.comuni-italiani.it/004/029/, accessed 24 October 2005). Finally, I was fortunate enough to be awarded a

Worldwide University Network exchange grant, a reciprocal graduate programme that allowed me to travel to the USA and be attached to the University of Washington, Seattle for a period of just over three months. The flexibility of the programme meant that I was allowed to move beyond the immediate vicinity of the university, and as such I decided to divide my time between Seattle and Berkeley, the latter a particularly apt place in terms of both my familiarity in having lived there as well as its well-known and vibrant SF convivia. My ensuing fieldwork in the USA was in fact carried out over a less demarcated area, stretching from Vancouver, Canada all the way down the west coast to Los Angeles. All in all, it was the emergent practices and methodologies (Rabinow, 1997; Maurer, 2005) that arose around these three 'sites' that informed my research. I hope to demonstrate that what is created out of a specific configuration of events, happenstance and temporal instances may be show itself to have the "capacity to demonstrate powers at higher levels of organisation which do not exist at others" (Thrift, 2003: 112).

3.2 "They should send you on highway 24 to 680 north..."

Who are "they" in my research? How did I go about finding the appropriate people to speak with and events to go to and which way did "they" then "send" me on that would chart out the direction of my research? Here I detail the initial foray into SFM with emphasis on some particular people and things that entered my research. I want to then look at the "expanded field" that was my research arena and comment more generally on the importance of place and the possible effect/affect that had on my research.

After having decided that I was going to research SF, an academic, Prof. Jonathan Murdoch, whom I had spoken to and was familiar with the movement, put me in contact with Wendy Forgarty, the aforementioned SF Governor in the UK. My first visit to London was for a press conference at the Borough Market, where SF had joined with another organisation, Food from Britain, to showcase foods that were going to the bi-annual Salone del Gusto in Turin, Italy. For this affair which was to be attended by some hundred or so journalists and media personnel, the director of SF International, Renato Sardo, had flown across with press officer Sandra Abbona

(among others). On my early arrival at the market, my request to be helpful was met -- amid a flurry of activities — by having me put together the press kit with Renato and Sandra. We sat there, student, press officer, and international director, stuffing papers and leaflets into folders and chatting amicably, albeit pre-occupied with the task at hand. Somewhere along the way coffee orders were taken and then brought to the table, and as luck would have it, Renato knocked his coffee over and it spilled across the press material. The 'chaos' that ensued, Renato's exclamation and despairing look and a horrified Sandra half-berating him and half-trying to salvage the material all the while conversing in animated Italian, was overwhelming for me, to say the least. We eventually got the mess cleared up and offending coffee spots removed by cutting down the sheets of material, but what I remember most distinctly was the gentle camaraderie and laughter amidst all of this, and the direct experience of this 'not to be too serious' attitude that I had read about in spite of SF's arguably serious aims.

The reason for this extended story is that I want to highlight the relaxed and opened attitude that I think is generally symptomatic of SFM, making it relatively easy for me to contact members of the organisation, as well as the things that on the way got tangled up in this research network. One, for example, almost takes for granted the emails that traffic research, but it is precisely this interface with people yet unknown to me that by and large determined whom I was going to meet or speak with. There was email snowballing: flagging my research to initial contacts who often put me in touch with others whom they thought would be helpful to my work, thus allowing me to study the SFM through various networked encounters. There were LISTSERVS — specifically the one run by the Association for the Study of Food & Society (ASFS) — where I occasionally placed inquiries on and responded to on SF-related matters. There were email responses when I spoke of an aspect of my research as being "slow food and art" which led to discussions on a range of creative endeavours carried out by various convivia, and also an opportunity to later visit and cement my correspondence with a group of SF members who were also artists by trade. On my first interview in Seattle, a food writer for the local paper, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, recommended a book which had in it a chef's 'menu responses' to various art pieces

that were done by local artists. I managed to trace the book back to its place of origin and found that the owner of the establishment where the chef worked was the convenor of SF Vancouver and through my interest in the book, secured an interview with him, his wife as the idea-originator of the book, and had dinner with him and a SF member who was also sitting on International Ark Committee. Finally, that the 'coffee incident' was memorable for SF's hapless director seemed to initiate a rapport between us, and although we worked out that it was not feasible for me to conduct ethnographic research in Bra due in part to language barriers and a lack of a supporting structure for researching students, I was hosted in the international office for a week where I observed the activities of the office, visited the site of the new university, and conducted thirteen interviews with people working in the varying SF departments.

While it was my initial avowal to only research card-carrying SF members, I realised later on that as much as I was driven to researching the official SFM, it was also about looking into what, I argue, is the driving force of the movement — the philosophy of slow in relation to food practices. Some of the 'non-member' statuses were simply a result of the lag time in membership renewal procedures. Some arose because of reasons pertaining to time constraints — especially prevalent among farmers — and/or financial reasons[1], and it was not my intention to exclude these people on solely these bases. Others however were symptomatic to this very processual movement. How was I to know that the people I met who had a keen interest in SFM were not going to become members in the future? Overall, in "feeling towards a method" (Latham, 2003: 2000), I was drawn, concurrent to analysing SFM, to the idea that if part of my research was to interrogate this philosophy of slow, there was often going to be presented to me a moment in time where the ordinary, everyday practices of a person who embodied the ideals of SF could possibly be amplified to perform materially what the SFM could only hope to emulate. I was researching then the presence and becoming-presence of the SFM.

[1] An individual's membership fees for 2005 stood at €55, approximately £37. This includes subscription to the SLOW magazines, but excludes the costs of attending events organised by the convivia.

Following Cook (1997), there is something to be said of the "expanded field" that I have chosen to locate my fieldwork in, the connected spaces linked by the self-as-researcher moving through a range of physical and ideological spaces and from which is created a SFM case study. Since the movement is extensively located, one can arguably be in the thick of action without necessarily being confined to one set location. In fact, I would take the precise conversations and practices that emerge from this multi-sited approach to indicate the very diversity of those who subscribe to the principles of SFM. Rather than a unified construction of a self searching for truth, there is hence a turn towards details that can be mobilised by a nomad passing through and attending to the "depth of surfaces" (Laurier & Philo, 2004: 429; see also Latham, 2003), for one should pay heed to the idea that "deep() readings...ignore the complexity and texture of the surface events, and thus they would fail to explicate how an order of activities is achieved as a contingent, moment-by-moment production" (Lynch & Bogen, 1996: 16).

Finally, even nomads visiting a multitude of locations stop somewhere to rest, eat and stock up. It has been suggested that not enough attention has been given to the importance of *place* in methodological research (Crang, 1994; Laurier, 2001; Dewsbury & Naylor, 2002; Anderson, 2004). Place, for instance, may affect the imaginative settings for interaction which are crucial to regulating social practices (Crang, 1994), be harnessed to elicit information and influence knowledge (Anderson, 2004), and have in-situ materialities that affect action (Dewsbury & Naylor, 2002). In line with these authors, I want to extend this understanding of place not as some foreign 'other' for either researcher or researched, but rather as one which exhibits different degrees of 'home', the results of which play a significant part in the methodological encounter. For me, much of the research took place around food or drink places. Most common were the cafés, ranging from the ubiquitous Starbucks (where it was often commented tongue-in-cheek that we were, in fact, subverting the space) to a favourite local haunt. Sometimes it was at a place of work — a bakery, for instance — sometimes it was 'at home' in a place of residence. The fact that, more often than not, the meeting places were chosen by those I had requested research help from meant that despite the gamut of places used that traversed degrees of

being public or private, workplace or home, work or leisure, there was always a measure of comfort and familiarity attached to them that had the effect of making people feel at ease in the world (Lugones, in Madison, 2005: 101).

3.3 "You will drive through Oakley, several shopping plazas and the road will narrow..."

En route, what do you observe or cannot help observing about the places you are passing through? How was I to know what should I be looking out for? Here, I describe how I felt that a methodology that used elements of both ethnography and interviewing techniques were most appropriate given my interest in interrogating how particularistic, localised practices informed and sustained the diversity of SFM as a whole.

Ethnography has been described as "providing nonreplicable insight into the processes and meanings that sustain and motivate social groups" (Herbert, 2000: 550), and one that is grounded in everyday cultural practices and social discourses (Denzin, 1997; 2003a; Willis 2000; Whatmore, 2003). As a method, it is one which harnesses a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) forged most commonly along the lines of participant observation and repeated interviews. Through this, it provides accounts of "acting in the world" (Denzin, 1997: 8). As an approach, there are many well-intentioned attempts to be sensitive to one's field of study, leading to it being often referred to as the "self-conscious project" of the ethnographic researcher (Katz, 1992: 496). While not advocating brutality, there is however a need to guard against the "'excesses' of reflexivity" (Crang, 2005: 226) that often not only situates but forcefully insinuates the self as a stable entity, and threatens by way of an initial and cursory self-disclosure, to exhibit levels of introspection that as an implied justification better represent and inform the ethnographic account. Rather, it should be considered that at any point in time of one's telling, writing or showing, the ethnographic account is already a mixing of "representation, interpretation and invention" (Katz, 1992: 496). In light of this, accounts made are always going to be partial and formed of a particular historical moment, and the reflexivity in them endemic (Herbert, 2000; Crang, 2003; 2005).

There is furthermore a blurring of the traditional notions of 'self' and 'other'. In my study, relations were never defined as powerful and oppressed, but rather, took on a more stammering and tentative nature. Sometimes was displayed my "extroverted sense of self" (Cook, 2005: 23) engaged in playful debates and banter, my voice creating a "public context for my articulated thought" (Denzin, 1997: 38); other times, a more pensive and listening self that was open to new understandings, insights and practices. Commonly, it was a combination of these 'selves', as was the case for the researcher, so too the researched. What this means then is that one should look beyond the dismissive suggestion of ethnography as 'deep hanging out' (see Madison, 2005: 17 for example), for the already-present, always-there self and other are often in constant negotiation, both demonstrating shifting and dynamic positionalities in an inter-subjective field. I want to suggest then that undertaking ethnographic fieldwork is always going to be a radical endeavour, a constant act of intervening in time/space, the effects of which, according to Madison (2005: 5), can alter things from "what is" to "what could be".

The three groups of people I contacted can be loosely defined as organisers, which included the staff at the SF Headquarters in Bra as well as the convivia leaders of the various groups, ordinary SF members, and producers of 'slow food'. There were some overlaps in the groups, as most in all three categories were first and foremost slow food members. On the other hand, usually on strong recommendation, there were some who lived 'slowly' but were not (yet) associated with SFM. These, however, were the exception rather than the norm. There were also some broad differences in the sorts of research that were carried out in the different areas. In London, SF activities revolved around a few key players and my role in it was of a more hands-on, participatory nature. These included assisting at events such as the UK Congress, press conferences at the British Writers Guild and London Vinapolis, and the official inception of the Cheddar Cheese Presidium. Sometimes these were carried out in tandem with educational or promotional tastings that were organised: olive oils from around the world or Fruili wines for instance. It was often the case that we would be attending to logistical problems while we grazed and talked about the food at hand. Towards the end of my fieldwork, I was also able to visit the

convivia in Ludlow and Bristol (fieldwork comes home!) and was heartened to witness the burgeoning movement taking root out of the capital city. In the USA, apart from a brief visit to the New York SF headquarters, all the fieldwork was conducted on the west coast of the country. Here, I felt that the approach to SFM was of a more self-assured manner, evident through my meetings with both convivia leaders and members and in attending events of the different convivia I made contact with. There was a sense that people were 'doing their own thing' though this is not to suggest that the SFM in the USA was more fragmented than in the UK. The group categorised as producers encompassed everyone who could be considered to be in the process of making slow food. There were farmers as there were cheese, chocolate and jam makers. Often they were thoughtful as they were matter-of-fact about their practices, and much was gleaned despite my not usually spending more than half a day with them.

Beyond the inflection of ethnography as that of participant observation (and its associated field notes), there was also an attempt to persuade people to keep food diaries similar to that propounded by Latham (2003) — a project in which participants could be reflexive and representative of themselves, a writing space where one could express the doing, thinking and remembering of food practices. My requests for this, however, were not met favourably. There was apprehension given the period over which this was to be done (two weeks), unfamiliarity with writing of this nature, but most of all, I think, it reinforced the importance of present-moment research.

Interviewing, as a 'present-presence' activity, was much better received and, as I am suggesting, more appropriate here. Firstly, there is an issue of physical proximity in relation to the way one does methodology. While observation and field note-taking is about conducting in-situ research, there is allowed a reflective/reflexive time gap in which one, commonly the researcher, may 'redo' the encounter in written discourse. With the presence of another in a face-to-face interview though, it is the words as they are spoken and mannerisms as they are displayed by both that create the interview. It was important to me that this was carried out not as a question-and-

answer session but as a conversation. In present moment, flow was important. I wanted to catch people in the thick of action, in the thick of what their thoughts were. In the act of explicating or ruminating 'doing slow', one is enacting out a part of the interview; in questioning back, one is observing this doing-in-motion, this saying-in-motion, and, in some sense, opening up additionally the space for another to respond to 'field notes' made in present contemplation. For example, I sometimes recursively worked what I had discussed, heard or learnt about in another interview into the present one. There is hence not only a "co-presence" (Crang, 2002: 651) but a co-construction of field knowledge (Crang, 2002; Thrift, 2003). This however is not to deny the possibility of ruptures. Sometimes a question sparked a sudden surge in interest when something was remembered, sometimes a discordance when ideas were not communicated at similar frequencies or when opinions differed. Sometimes when I raised an uncomfortable subject, the gestures and intonation changes were palpable. It is also not to recognise that some are more practised than others at doing interviews, and therefore display different levels of competencies, able for instance to emphasise some aspects while playing down others. The concern here, though, was not to verify the truth factor of what has been said as much as acknowledge that at this point in time, one had chosen to elucidate it as such.

Questions were asked according to the 'greater' designation of each member — so as SF staff over local organiser, organiser over member and so on. It was more a question of prioritising questions than exclusion though, as it meant that those that could be answered by a greater number of people could be cut out in case of time constraints, and that esoteric questions were dealt with first. At the headquarters in Bra, questions were asked of the duties and roles of the varying departments (Appendix B). These were gleaned from the literature I had read and from my participant observations thus far out prior in an attempt to understand the organisation of the movement. In speaking to the SF personnel, certain pertinent issues were picked up for discussion. These were in regard to editing, translating and the pictorial selections for the Slow magazine; setting up the University of Gastronomy; Ark products selection and Presidia funding; planning of the Salone del Gusto; the Masters of Taste education syllabus, press material dissemination and last

but most importantly, the explication of SF International. This visit helped firm up the questions that I would subsequently ask of my interview participants hereafter. As a way of explaining my project to convivia leaders and members, I offered a one-page plain language/lay statement (Appendix C) which stated my aims, theoretical framework and driving curiosities. Everyone was also given access to my set of materials (Appendix D) from which were drawn the interview questions. These were formulated broadly, but distilled from the popular and academic literature on SF that I read, as well as from issues that had emerged from speaking first hand with personnel in Bra, and sensing and hearing their philosophical outlooks and methods of conducting SF affairs. Questions were tweaked to each individual depending on a range of factors including their strength of involvement, interests and from information that I may have picked up in earlier interviews.

The interview was divided into three parts. The first dealt with personal narratives, identities and involvements in and of SF. I wanted to find out about people's allure to SFM and jolt recollections of when they consciously aligned their practices with SFM. It was also to examine the alignment of present and future 'like-minded' concerns with that of SFM, and by looking at a range of issues ranging from environmental, health, education to the praxis of political activism, one could tease out people's connections and motivations around certain thematic points. Despite their diversity there was, indeed, something that held them together. The second part was to tap more 'sensibly' into a SF setting and its associated food products. Here was activated more strongly the reliance on memory, both in its habitual everyday and spectacular forms. The interest here was not so much in testing the extent of remembering (or forgetting) as it was in the very *act* of remembering as being that which may reiteratively be passed on and regaled to friends, families and other SF members. It was also to evoke taste and the multi-senses as a countenance to earlier questions which were more focused on the thoughts and philosophical leanings in relation to SFM.

This provided a way of getting into the third part of my research, which was more experimental in its attempt to marry interviewing techniques with aspects of

performative ethnography (see, for example, Denzin, 1997; 2003a; 2003b; Madison, 2005). It has been argued that ethnographic (re)presentations gain much force and clarity if they take into consideration the imaginative, sensual and more-than-cognitive possibilities that are already conditioning, grounding and setting the range of social thought and action (Seremetakis, 1994; Stoller, 1997; 2004; Herbert, 2000; Willis, 2000; Howes, 2004). Since I was interested in the *fil rouge* that binds SF together, I could not ignore the call to interrogate imaginatively and sensually the 'aesthetics of pleasure' that I felt was integral, and indeed the driving force of SFM. To do this, I introduced visual art into the interviews. This was carried out for two main reasons. First, I wondered if art could be used as a viable analogy for the pleasure one gets from a SF encounter. As I wanted interviewees to utilise more fully their multi-sensory to better express a SF experience, I felt I needed to provide an alternative in-road for which one could do so should words elude or defy such an explanation. Second, I hoped that focusing attention on art refocused attention on the very artfulness of food itself and its associated practices. Visual art that were shown and provided to interviewees, in this case a famous Rothko painting and a self-drawn olive oil tasting diagram, were used for the pragmatic reasons of their being mobile, transportable through various mediums and perhaps because it is one of the most commonly recognised forms when a reference to 'art' is made. It is perhaps ironic that I would employ the dominant sense of vision to evoke the other senses. In this case, I felt it was possible that the multi-sensory could be caught 'in the action' and show itself as visual art, and also, that in the creativity of the people involved it would be used as a jump-off point and readily translated to examples relevant to themselves. Art, in all its colours, hues and intensities, was not a data generator (Crang, 2003) or a text to be read but rather, the aesthetically mediating 'thing' to bring together talk, action and performance.

Methods of analysing data were gradually built from the information gathered from interviews and from the personal field notes written in the course of ethnographic observation. Interviews were conducted in situ or 'on the move' and - with the exception of two interviews for which notes were penned immediately after - recorded on a digital recorder. They were transcribed in full. Expressions or

verbal/non-verbal gestures that were emphasised were indicated on the transcripts, as were any feelings or impressions I had pre or post-interview. To further analyse the data retrospectively, methods relating to both narrative and discourse analysis were undertaken. This was carried out because I felt that it was important to consider the chronological flow of an individual's account as it was to examine any intersecting discourse that were made by interviewees both consciously and unconsciously. For each thematic chapter of the thesis written, each interview transcript was revisited to draw out persistent themes that emerged and that were pertinent to the chapter. Some taxonomic work that related to analysis of content was also carried out where more specific observations/points were distilled from the broader themes first singled out. For instance, for the chapter on aesthetics, narratives and quotations were gathered on 'art and life'. From this compilation, sub-themes emerged, such as that relating to 'music', 'beauty' or 'nature'. Indicative functions (for instance, that of the five senses, or those regarding 'feeling' and 'thinking') were deliberately separated, or grouped together under the concepts such as 'flow' or 'balance'. Some ideas appearing in both interviews and field notes were also brought together as relating to the 'aesthetic experience', under which issues such as 'movement' and 'atmosphere' were key concepts that were expressed.

In the course of the thesis, two main approaches to presenting the 'voices' of SF were used. One regards the careful use of quotations that explicated some key issues that emerged from conversations with interviewees. This was possible as these (often) concise quotes expressed clearly the intention of the interviewee on the subject matter at hand. The integrity of the interview was, to me, not lost by any lack of coherency with the other segments of the conversation. The other regards the use of extended description relating to an event, circumstance or personal history. While often written retrospectively, I felt it best portrayed the inextricable nature of interviews from ethnographic observation, and also the combined positionality of the interviewer/interviewee. The adherence to language, and faith in the written word to delineate the spoken and un/not spoken is furthered by the dialogic and performative modes as explained below.

3.4 "Be sure to signal a left turn...People drive like idiots out in the country..."

As the journey continues, what sort of peoples (and things) does one meet or chance upon, and what is the nature of these encounters? Here, I want to examine what it is methods actually 'do' by suggesting that the efficacy of my chosen methodology can be assessed by its communicating along two main modes: the dialogic and the performative.

There were recorded a total of sixty-four encounters during the fieldwork period (a full listing being available in Appendix E). I say encounters, for even though most took the form of interviews that incorporated evincing art or artfulness as detailed above, what I wish to foreground is the production of each encounter: that it is a specific time/space configuration in which the self and other meet and out of which - sometimes with the help of things — a dialogue emerges that will leave traces and have repercussions on a contingent moment-in-time. There is, of course, no such thing as a pure, unadulterated dialogue. Before discussing the related notion of a 'dialogic' (Bakhtin, 1986; 1993) which I think is integral to my project, the following should be considered.

Firstly, that research into conversation analysis has interrogated well not only *how* things are told, but also the representation of the 'real' time event, the contextualisation to 're-mark' on its space-timing, and the expression and reproduction of this time-space (see Thrift, in Laurier, 1998: 40; Doel, 1999: 47). Secondly, that in conversations, in 'talk', language is very important. By this I am referring to a range of ways in which "language (is) social action" (Laurier, 1998: 38). Briefly, to name a few examples, this is derived from ideas such as Wittgenstein's (1968: para 116, 125) notion that lest we get entangled in the rules of the language game that we ourselves have made up, words should have meanings that are derived from their uses; Austin's (1975) speech act theory, in which a singular word — performative utterance — can be seen to 'do' something and have an effect; Derrida's (1979) citation which pays attention to the always-past context that current speech is indebted to; and Butler's (1990) reiterative performativity in which sentences uttered reinforce certain identity stereotypes. Thirdly, that in a dialogue

there are what Foucault (1972: 74) calls "systems of formation" that in some part determines and guides the direction of the encounter, acting as they do as:

> "a complex group of relations that functions as a rule...lay(ing) down what must be related, in a particular discursive practice, for such and such an enunciation to be made, for such and such a concept to be used, for such and such a strategy to be organised".
>
> (ibid)

Here is explicated the ways in which discursive formations, whilst they may contradict each other or differ in substance, still exhibit a certain regularity in the relations between the statements made as they remain governed by what it is possible to say and think about a particular topic (Allen, 2003: 25). In interviewing, for example, our usage of specific words/concepts to enquire of people how closely they saw certain discursive ideas to be related may be bound to elicit a certain type of response. So it is not enough to ask "is biodiversity good" or even why it is so as this may only so far as to aid in a sort of practised, standardised response. Rather there was a need to further engage the individual to draw upon webs of connection which may substantiate their response, and look to the sort of praxis that might arise from their opinions on the matter, notwithstanding the existence of these discursive systems of formation. Lastly, an 'other' in a dialogue may feature a 'thing' as both material and immaterial entities, both profane and symbolic (Willis, 2000), 'thing' and 'sign' at different moments in time (Latour, 1999). It could be a recording device used during interviews which 'talks' back in transcription as it could be the mediating coffee in hand which sets the mood for the conversation, the ubiquitous tomato example that is being spoken about, the colour on the wall that is pointed to which a food comparison has been made, the handicraft that is moulded on a similar ethos as that of food preparation. And while there may be a discursively and "locally ordered affair of people and things" (Laurier, 2001: 487), there can also be spaces and moments of interruption where things "buzz" and fly between human and 'mouth language' (Doel, 2001). It is hence not about putting things on a pedestal as it is in noticing their incumbency and our practised (and clumsy) everyday interaction with them.

To return to the 'dialogic' so promised, it is evident then that a 'dialogue' incorporates and takes into consideration the points as stated above. But it is also about examining what it is that creates a sort of communication or understanding between two (or more) people and related things, and not only what is produced in that encounter, but the result too, and its subsequent iteration(s). For a start, a dialogue needs an 'other'. Notwithstanding the changing notions of the 'self' and 'other' in the expanded field, there is a need to ensure that one is not conflated with the other. Indeed, it should be insisted upon that 'self' and 'other' is a difference that cannot be overcome for even as two bodies, for example, are present at the same event and doing the same thing, the space in which "we regard the world and each other (is) from different centres in cognitive time/space" (Holquist, 2002: 22). As Holquist (1999: 99) had stated in an earlier work:

> "Self therefore is a relation, but because it is so fundamental a relation, dialogue can help us understand how other relationships work. So whatever else it is, self/other is a relation of simultaneity"

Dialogue, thus, is not speech acts, speech or even 'talk' unless there is an 'other' involved. More than that, it has to be an 'other' that is engaged with the 'self' to which the shared event makes each 'one' and 'other' answerable (Bakhtin, 1993; Holquist, 2002); it is an imperative to respond — in words, in actions, in performance. We cannot choose not to be in dialogue, for:

> "The world addresses us and we are alive and human to the degree that we are answerable. We are responsible in the sense that we are *compelled* to respond, we cannot choose but give the world an answer...the place I occupy in existence is, in the deepest sense of the word, an answerability".
>
> (Holquist, 2002: 30, original emphasis)

It is precisely this answerability then that creates the conditions for a 'dialogic', a relative but uniquely meaningful relationship arising out of *bodies* engaged in this particular dialogue, a context in which the *utterances* of bodies cannot be reduced to a sum of their parts but treated as a whole (Denzin, 1997; Holquist, 1999; 2002). There is thus included in the dialogic not just the dialogue, but the presence of bodies, referring here to physical bodies as they do to political ones and bodies of ideas in general as well as to a more generous idea of utterances which is not speech per se

but in its plural form encompasses the visible (seen), auditory (heard) and sensory (felt-sensing) (see Denzin, 1997; Madison, 2005). Specifically it recognises that dialogic relationships can not only involve things — texts, artwork, for instance — but indeed can be *in* dialogue with them, as 'one' is with an 'other', regardless of designation as researcher or researched, author or reader. Finally, that the dialogic compels a messy, leaky dialogue not only in present moment but whenever in the future it is revisited points in no uncertain terms to the idea that the dialogic is always a performance.

As was told to me in the email, "(p)eople drive like idiots out in the country". Why do people do that? Perhaps it is about needing to escape from the city coupled with the feeling of openness that the country (and its roads) gives them. But why do people feel a certain way about certain things? Here, as urged by the work carried out in sensual ethnography, I wish to pay closer attention to how the feelings and emotions of SFM and its members might propel them to act — perform — in a certain way. I want to then suggest that their terms of portrayal or expression may be pursued along the lines of performances in the theatrical sense, and then look at the manner in which the performance of SFM at large conjoins with my own methodological persuasions that it is the performative that drives the movement.

It has been suggested, throughout this chapter, that the senses, emotions and feelings are important to this research into SFM. With rigour was coupled the felt-sensing of what a 'better' research strategy might constitute; the incident regarding Renato and the spilled coffee that elicited laughter was symptomatic of the ease, openness and congeniality of those I met to discuss SF, aided by the places at which research were conducted; interview questions which interrogated the multi-sensual of SF; the evocation of memorable 'taste' and 'pleasure'; the utilisation of visual art and colour in particular as an appeal to the aesthetics of SF; the ways in which this ethnographic-interview technique sought to congeal thinking practices with doing practices. There is a suggestion then that a dialogue — in words and texts — emerges to account for all these. But with that too is the broader dialogic performance, one that shows that, perhaps, the pleasure of SF and its sensate inscriptions on bodies

result in an experience that may not be subsumed to language. If the pleasure of partaking SF is aligned with one's interest and feelings towards 'art', then what the food expresses cannot be put back into words as its expression is internal to the character of the food, the event and the food-body encounter. The performative food then educes a corporeal response whose outlet of expression may be better compared to a painting or a piece of music, for instance, than descriptive language, a sort of performative food traffic that brings my 'artful' project back in line with precisely what SFM is trying to do.

There is a need to safeguard 'performance' and its associated ideas, for care should be taken in ensuring that it does not become a newfangled word for what otherwise could be called 'doing'. One way it is not mere 'doing' is in its creation of a rupture in everyday habits (Madison, 2005). In some sense, to perform is to 'raise the game', to undertake a doing that will have an effect on another person or thing that makes the 'other' sit up and notice. Of course therein lays the creative tension between performativity and performance, for where one suggests a becoming act, another suggests a done one (Denzin, 2003b). That is not to say that the latter is hypostasized, for every performance entails preparation, a polishing-up of that which it is intended to effect and affect, a way of better performing and "interven(ing) between experience and story told" (Langellier, 1999: 128; see also Denzin, 1997; 2003b) And drawing on the historical contingency of Derrida (1979) and the notion of reiterative performances in Butler (1990), every performance is at once an original and an imitation (Denzin, 2003); it is the elements of the everyday with the sometimes heightened.

Another reason for flagging performance is in its useful theatre-oriented terminology to make sense of this particular 'doing', but in such a way that it is not removed from our quotidian experiences. Performers, for instance, may shore themselves up before a performance, displaying their extroverted sense of self as needed for the occasion. In an interview performance, they script their own dialogue and choose what they want to say. This of course depends on how much they have used their rehearsal space and how practised they are. Acting out the 'self' of a particular space/time is

bound to leave traces and have repercussions. To that may be added an aspect of excess in performance, whether accidental or intentional, and it is not contained within the person but flows out to an audience. In any case, as Goffman (1959: 73-4) suggests, "we all act better than we know how". There are then the props, the things that hold up the performance — food, for instance, that performers use to enrich and make sense of the play. And then there is the audience, choosing to come to this theatrical space — a SF tasting venue, Salone del Gusto, a SF member's house — and displaying different degrees of receptiveness to performance made more intense because the 'other' space is already, to some extent, home (Madison, 2005).

The methodological field can also be a theatre where rehearsal and performance spaces co-exist. Through practice — SF practice — is drawn in the subject, the audience and the performers into a tangle of a space that portrays the performance as experience from which expression may pour forth together with expression as social behaviour from which is enacted the performance, a kind of "show(ing) ourselves to ourselves" (Madison, 2005: 154). Furthermore, in twinning the dialogic performance with the emotional felt-sensing, there is added the possibility of each party bearing better witness and responding accordingly, the audience exchanging roles with the performers, the performers reworking to improve a script or a performance. Finally, following Conquergood (1991: 190; see also Denzin, 2003: 191-2), attention paid to the performance of SFM calls forth a performative food politics that recognises experience as knowing, allows for the co-performing of food with a kindred, is at once an autoethnographic account as it is critical and inquiring of itself, and has the ability to evoke and invoke a community of shared physical, emotional and social experiences. There is hence a politics of performance that takes into account a politics of engaging the senses (Seremetakis, 1994; Law, 2001; Stoller, 2004), a performance that subscribes to a deontological politics of change that is "unquestionably political and irrevocably beautiful at the same time" (Morrison, in Madison, 2005: 175), a "bring(ing) a way of life to life" (Herbert, 2000: 552).

3.5 "Be very careful..."

This is a statement that I think reflected not so much the paranoia of a secluded, country farmer not used to city drivers (she grew up in Los Angeles after all), but more as a personal note of concern for my safety. And as a means now of opening up for 'show' how one endeavours to trace out this movement, I wish to point towards the strengths and weaknesses of the performed, embodied self in a way that calls not for its censure but rather attention to a politics of openness that lays bare a life of a fieldworker. What follows then are field notes taken over the two days that I visited the Salone del Gusto in 2002.

26/10/02: Salone del Gusto, Turin, Italy

I'm feeling nauseous and trying to rapidly recover from yesterday's meal (Amsterdam) which is what I think gave me this bout of food poisoning, and correspondingly, there is a dulling blandness about my mouth. Hopefully the flavours of the slow food products will perk me up.

Been walking around for close to 2 hours, and I'm literally dragging my feet. And my mouth. The inclination to put food to mouth is not a strong one as my stomach is still queasy, but I feel like I should. And I do, quite consciously, try as much as I can, and almost will myself to taste. There are various taste sensations, but they feel...blunted, as if I'm not hitting the potential for each product's taste. Salone presents itself in somewhat hectic activity, and I am really quite overwhelmed with it. But I'm also a little disappointed. The conviviality that has been spoken about regarding this event isn't what I imagine it to be. In fact, I'm struck by the seeming commercialism that seems to be running through the various booths – the impetus to sell, perhaps. Maybe I had been too idealistic – this is their trade after all, and surely the woolly culture that is supposed to strongly situate food has a more pragmatic face. Not that this is a bad exhibition – I see traces of the spirit of slow food here and there. But it could be better. And it would help if I felt less sick...

Contrast this to the experience a day later.

27/10/02: Salone del Gusto, Turin, Italy

Feeling much better today, as is my mood, stomach, palate, and correspondingly it seems, everything else. Hardly anyone is grumpy today, and the feeling of commercialism and monetary imperatives has ebbed away. Start at the other corner today, the small fish/seafood street that deserves a lot more attention for its quality. Wouldn't forget the eel paste I tried which had a nice pate feel and ended, wonderfully with this intense (but not fishy) taste of immense melt-in-your-mouth roundness....

By and large, I would imagine, the feel of this exhibition would not have altered much from one day to the next, but my experience, feel and reading of it certainly had. This, I would suggest may be a pitfall in placing too much emphasis and privileging embodiment as if "the flesh were a grounding metaphor for truth" (Crang, 2003: 500). Along the same vein, there have been a few instances of missed opportunities because I was unwilling to have a hurried schedule, for example meeting up with a SF member who was a synaesthetist as I was leaving town, oversleeping a ten o'clock interview due to a previous' day long drive, or indeed, choosing out of presumed politeness not to record an encounter that I would later lament.

Of course the shortcomings in research, such as withholding the said voice recorder, can arise out of feeling so at ease and in the flow of the situation that producing a blatant piece of research instrument might seem discordant to the environment. The situation which is so produced, however, represents to me an instance of the serendipities of doing research, and out of this I recognise the ethics that has guided and that I hope will be evidently guiding my research journey.

One is the ethics of friendship. It has been suggested that friendship is a primary site for research (Rabinow, 1996), but even so there is a distinction, following Aristotle, on the type of friendships that could be forged. Often, it was not friendship per se, but a certain sort of friendliness (Kirsch, 2005) in which an arbitrary social contract was made between researcher and researched that arose out of the latter wanting to 'help', of being given a space to reflect on the SF process, or plain intrigue or curiousness towards my research. This led to one member calling our encounter and subsequent contact a "low maintenance friendship" (Gerry), one which served the purpose for a moment but because of a shared understanding could once again be picked up effortlessly in the future. There was, for instance, a lady who wanted to speak with me because her daughter had studied in Bristol, the time investment of a SF leader who was an experienced researcher and aided in the tweaking of my research questions, being accommodated at a guesthouse because the place I was conducting my interviews was remote, being sent to the local grocers to sample a

farmhouses' cheese, taken on a three-hour ride each way to visit a farmer whose land could only be accessed by a four-wheel drive, the general hospitality, food and drink that was provided to be more than simply 'fuel' food. Research conducted with a measure of friendship has the possibility of affective ties being issued organically from the ebb and flow of everyday life (Tillmann-Healy, 2003).

Two is the ethics of care. Notwithstanding the lack of any clear power relation between self and other, there is still needed a care that one takes in approaching another subject, towards the sensitive issues that might emerge, and to non-disclosure in light that a person might be identified against her or his own wishes. Care should also be taken in both meaning-making and sense-making practices (Willis, 2000). On account that one wants to approach more closely the SF experiences, there is a need to take more seriously the multi-faceted human and things, and a making sure of not misrepresenting, mis-showing or mis-telling that space.

Three is the ethics of responsibility, whereby following Spinoza (see Thrift, 2003), we take on the responsibility, through using the imagination to produce good encounters, to become something different by expanding our and others' subjectivities, whilst still finding a liminal mean of not being totally inside or outside (Madison, 2005). As we write from our body and through our body, there is a need to pay attention not only to the sensualities of others, but also for the haptic, embodied self to "rethink their scholarly-being-in-the-world" (Stoller, 2004: 817).

3.6 "Honk your honk and we will come open the gate for you..."

When do you finally decide that you have arrived, and that your methodological journey is finished? Perhaps when it is when the narratives start to sound similar, feel similar, enacting repeat performances that intuitively do not add anymore or substantively to your account. Maybe it's a more banal decision of an actual date when you decide to 'stop' fieldwork. As I am sitting in a wine bar in antipodean Melbourne whose chalk signboard proclaims the manifesto of SF, am I considered to have stopped researching, actively now translating my research into a personalised

social practice? Of course not everything food or even SF related is research, though it might make a difference that when I am pleased with what I have eaten it then relates to my working ethos. But at the same time that a driving excursion ends (fieldwork), the stage is set for another encounter, an "opening of the gate" to continue the work done. If 'all the world's a stage where everyone must play a part', then one is ensured that the fieldwork that was performed may continuing to have repercussions outside this writer's domain (one hopes!), that the activities and events that were researched upon are still going on or have taken a line of flight in a productive manner, that whatever is being written here will continue to be read, understood and proliferated in ways yet to be known, understood or felt.

Chapter 4: The Sociality of the Commodity

4.1 Introduction

With the first bowl of 'protest penne' presented outside the McDonalds at the *La Spagna* in Rome, SF declared itself a consumer movement, defending the consumer's right to the taste and pleasure of food. The consumer in question here is specifically the gastronome, and she/he is one whose vicissitudes has followed, to a greater or lesser extent, the movement's goals. The initial focus on the pleasure of eating well (the greedy gourmand comes to mind) has moved towards a trimmer figure focusing on the ecological concerns relating to food (eco-gastronomy), the producer as the integral 'other' half to the consumer, and more recently, to the cooks and eateries that bring the food into being (neo-gastronomy). Through this all, the link between consumer and food has held steadfast.

This chapter is premised on exploring this link within the SFM, stitching together commodities and consumers within a context that also highlights their sociality. To do this entails focusing attention on a number of things. In first instance then is the issue of the commodity:

There is by implication a difference between consuming a bowl of penne and a cheeseburger. And what may the difference be? Food entities in everyday life seem to occupy the position of being main attraction and side-show, excess and absence, ideological and material, aesthetic or otherwise. The difference, I would argue, does not lie in juxtaposing the penne with the burger, one against the other, but rather in sorting through the mix so that one may amplify the pertinent characteristics that go into making a possible *commodity type* that is reminiscent of being slow. By focussing on commodity type in this first section I mean to open up a materialist concern, resonating a Marxist analysis of the commodity with notions of consumption. Ideas of sign, use and exchange values are also brought under scrutiny here, as discussion with SF members on these slow commodity types – under the heading 'of tomatoes and head-cheeses' - appear to expose their meaning within the commodity form as

well as challenge the conceptual separation of these categories. In light of the "enduring distance between production and consumption" (Negus, 2002: 501), the focus of this section is on explicating the *terms* and *relations* of exchange which bridge this distance. If, as previously stated, SFM is a rendezvous platform for producers and consumers, what are the terms of understanding or agreement that causes a food commodity to change hands? That is, who is involved in this agreement, what sort of commodities are included, and under what conditions do these exchanges take place?

In the second instance, there is the issue of the commodity in action: An account of the Somerset Cheddar Cheese Presidium is then used in the section 'Slow Cheddar Cheese' to describe and elucidate the embodied character of a slow commodity type as it journeys from cow to cheese.

This case study account spurs a wider debate into how nature figures in the slow commodity, and vice versa. The third instance relates to the socio-spatial processes of commodifying nature, and the politics that entails. These processes will interrogate the changing relations between nature, and that of the consumer, rendering specific consumer imaginaries of the slow commodity in relation to Marxist concerns explored earlier.

Finally, the fourth instance pulls together the considerations of the slow commodity thus far in the section entitled 'Social lives, political assemblages'. In what Appadurai (1986) calls the 'social life of things' attempt is made to not only demonstrate the circulation of slow commodities, but also the consider the sorts of commodity-consumer relations that are formed. Ideas of affordances and knowledge present opportunities towards an expanded understanding on the sociality of food commodities. Some thoughts on the paradoxical emergence of a 'SF Brand' also contribute to this understanding.

4.2 Commodity

A recent academic editorial declared that, over the last decade, commodities have made a striking resurgence in the discipline of geography and in the academy at large (Bridge & Smith, 2003). While it is arguable that interest in the commodity since

the publication of *Capital* (Marx, 1867/1976) has been anything but sustained, it can be observed that even in its inflected form via the discourse on consumption, the commodity has held centrality and yielded much attention. The edited works such as those found in The Consumer Society Reader (Lee, 2000), Commercial Cultures (Jackson et al, 2000), The Consumption Reader (Clarke et al, 2003) and Geographies of Commodities Chains (Hughes & Reimer, 2004) attests to such currency and vibrancy.

What has brought this about? Fine and Leopold (1993) speak of "systems of provision" as commodity-specific chains linking production, marketing, and distribution, all the way to consumption. As a visible process that stretches commodities across a range of sites, it brings to light the movements that occur between producing the commodity and its consumption, and vice versa. The commodity then is (at least) bi-directional. It is driven by the traditionally conceived logics of economics that structure its supply to a more recent recognition that there is "demand-led capitalism" (Miller, 1995: 7) guiding production. In other words, consumption motivates production as much as production structures consumption.

The commodity at the centre of such processes traverses much ground. It is sometimes suggested, for example, that this realignment of thinking about production and consumption arises out of a post-fordist/postmodern sentiment that prefers the aesthetic over the functional, the sign over the material (see for example, Lee, 1993; Jackson & Thrift, 1995; Miller, 1995; Miles & Paddison, 1998). Baudrillard's (1981) argument regarding the 'economy of the sign' — that objects surpass their symbolic representation to become and be articulated solely as their sign-values — is often taken to be exemplary of such thinking. Clarke, Doel and Housiaux (2003) disagree, arguing that this is a common misreading of Baudrillard. According to Clarke, Doel and Housiaux (2003) Baudrillard's sign enunciates a cultural aspect which is already constituted within this world. In a similar vein is broken down the pre-conceived dichotomy between the commodity and its supposed opposite, the gift (Mauss, 1990). In examining how a gift necessitates its reciprocity, and the process of gift-giving itself reinforces status within society, Mauss contributes an important

idea: that if ever there was a conceptual divide between these two categories based on monetary exchanges, it would be one that is bridged on consideration that they are both governed by the rules of differential resource distribution that are inherent in both gift-giving and commercial exchanges. Indeed the issue of 'gift' itself – of what, to who, from where[2] – is suffused with complexity and contradictions that will no doubt unsettle the sureties of any commodity/gift divide. Finally, the distinction between necessities and luxuries can also be murky. Above the baseline of starvation, is eating well — which may correspond to choices made regarding money spent, personal health concerns and care for the environment — a necessity or a luxury? The question of whether we need to eat in a particular way or a particular item then becomes more a question of ontology, a question of what 'well' is. The commodity is vague, its form amorphous. But by attending to the nuances of the symbolic and the material, monetary and power inequalities, and normative needs and wants, a commodity can be made to speak more precisely of its cultural materialism in this world.

It is with these understandings in train that a conceptualisation of the slow food commodity can begin. The slow food commodity is not food grown in one's backyard for personal consumption, and it is not barter. The commodity in question needs to travel some distance between the producer and consumer, and along the way these roles are not interchangeable. For example, a well-intentioned plan for members of a convivium to sell their own garden produce at a local farmer's market went awry when it was seen to be in competition with the farmers themselves. Indeed, tied to its cultural materialism then is the economic imperative to sustain any slow commodity. Conversely, it may also be said that the commodity here is the very economic materialism of the cultural. There has to be an exchange of money involved, or something that is set up to directly signify the potential for such monetary exchanges (for example, food sponsorship during an SF event to procure publicity), but the centrality of this monetary exchange to the commodity is

[2] For instance, a commodity could be a gift of kindness (intent), a gift to health (person) or a gift of the earth (place), even if one just focuses on "gifts of the good" (Ross, 1999) which themselves range from positions of domination to positions of responsibility.

debatable. That is, there is a big-picture notion of the necessity of monetary exchange but money is not always crucial to each exchange. What is clear is that the SF commodity is strongly constituted by its social meanings. For while food objects may exist in the world, they require some form of human intervention to enact them into being, to ensure they pass into exchange from one to another. The manoeuvres of the slow commodity then are around the concepts embodied in these foods, and the social expression of them as objects intertwined with humans.

1.1.1 Of tomatoes and head-cheeses

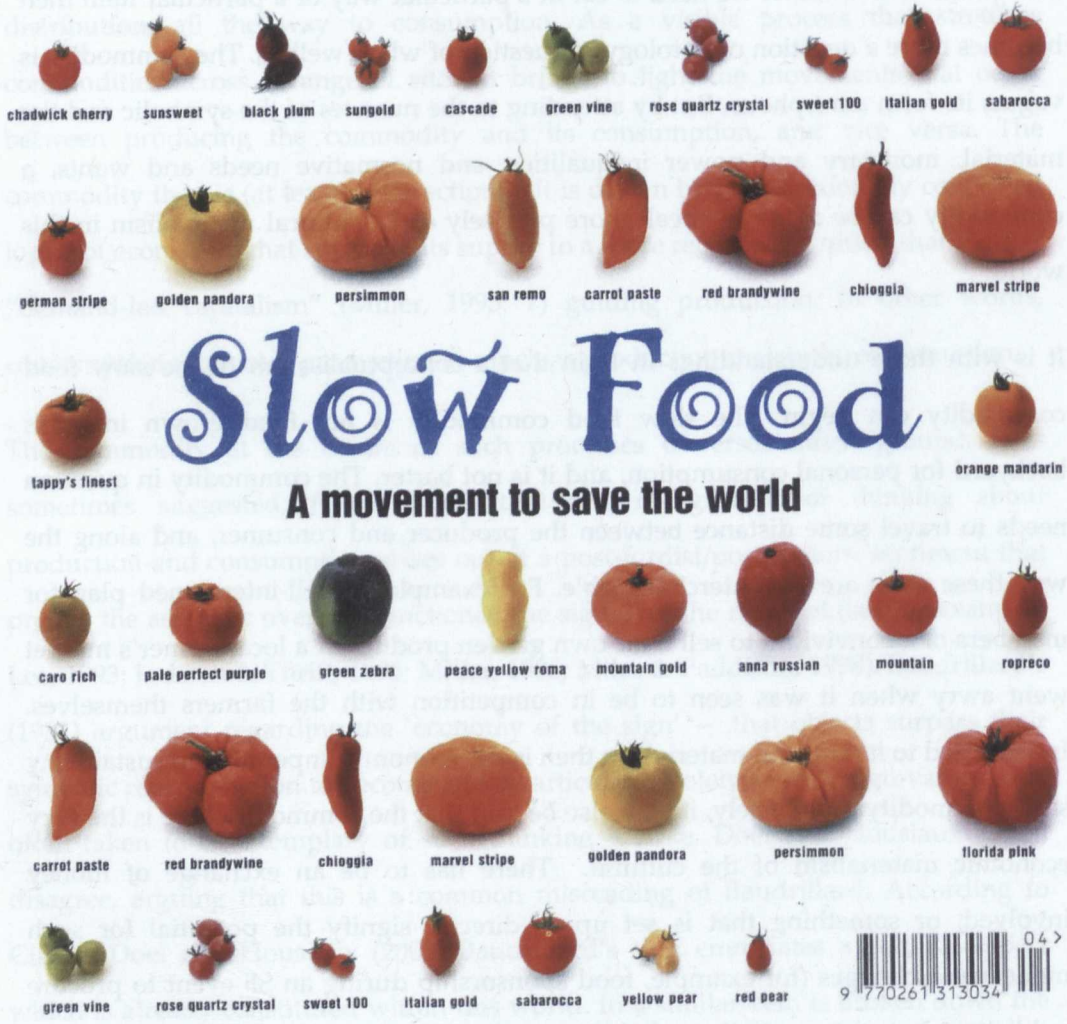

Fig 1: Cover picture of The Ecologist, 2004

Let me be very clear on one issue: there is no such thing as a slow food product. There is no officially sanctioned item, or group of items, which has been given the SF brand or 'stamp of approval'. However certain items have not only a tendency to be associated but also *tenacity* of association (see Fig.1) with the movement such that they become a SF 'type'. There are food items that are consistently considered more slow food-oriented, as there are those that consistently sit on the other side of the divide. I consider at first instance the tomato, for it is seen by many of the SF members as the epitome of the slow commodity:

> If we can drop a fresh vine-ripened tomato to every American and say, "Ok guys this is a real tomato, all the other stuff is not". That kind of education will really be as instructive as anything.
>
> (Valerie)

> I think those kinds of food are more representative of themselves. I know it sounds very vague, but a tomato that has been grown properly, grown with care, grown by somebody who might be a slow food member or advocate, it will taste more like a tomato.
>
> (Hsiao Ching)

A tomato appears to be a telling example because it is perceived to be widely recognisable as a sort of everyday food, an ingredient used in many cuisines, in many different forms, and most importantly, can be eaten and tasted for its own sake. It presents itself as a possibility of an already present connection made between people and food: people 'know' a tomato. It is not a foreign, exotic fruit that needs approximation to something familiar but, as Hsiao Ching says, represents itself. At the same time however, the tomato may also be the precise point of disconnect — it was frequently suggested that despite the tomato being ubiquitous, many have not tasted the 'real' tomato.

> I see how the produce (that) is mass marketed in grocery stores put far too much emphasis on perfection in looks...tomatoes that don't even taste like one...I couldn't stand the baseballs in the grocery store.
>
> (Alethea)

> Why not eat the stuff which is going to taste better...if you want a little red thing that doesn't taste at all like a tomato and that turns you on it's fine, but a lot of people would prefer to eat fresh tomatoes when they taste wonderful.
>
> (Judy)

The tone in which the tomato is spoken of here — as some 'little red thing' or like a 'baseball' — is disparaging, where the tomato is made to seem diminutive, almost devoid of food-status, or an oversized version of what it should be. Despite descriptions such as 'vine-ripened' or of 'heirloom variety' being used to qualify tomatoes, the distinctions suggested by SF members signify attention paid not to status or preciousness but rather to the produce *at hand*. Of course this does not just apply to the tomato. It could very well be referring to peaches, lettuces, or indeed even head-cheeses (more of this later). So maybe it is not the type of food per se that is important but as is often highlighted, it is the character of the slow food type that is emphasised.

> I don't really feel like I have a sophisticated palate...I couldn't tell you the nuances: the low note, the balance, that sort of thing. It's more like fresh, delicious energy to me. And it can be simple and it can be complex.
>
> (Becky)

> Here, we tend to allow the flavour of what's there to come through. And I think that's a huge slow thing. It's an amazing part of the movement that I love, the freshness and don't mess with it kinda attitude.
>
> (Stephanie)

> To be able to see something and use something that you normally see as powder. I want to see what it's like before it's concentrated, dried, desiccated.
>
> (Susan)

> I see trained cooks worry about texture, taste, smell, colour in putting together the perfect dish, and I don't see it that way. I just want to experience what it's supposed to be.
>
> (Leonard)

> Food should be very seasonal...The flavour from raw products when they're at the height of their development, they are going through a biological change, and the change is at their peak, and that's when we want to be eating the stuff.
>
> (Chris)

The simplicity of taste of unadulterated food is often mentioned, the 'before' state which opposes fanciful 'elite' tasting and the frills that might come on a serving plate. The freshness of food at the 'height of (its) development' is the energy that allows it to *embody itself*. This simplicity however does not come from any one-dimensional quality it may have but derives from the reasoning that it does not need much else. One antinomy of a slow commodity then is that in its simplicity lies its complexity. It

is a complexity in taste and in character that fulfils itself. Conversely, a commodity that requires a lot of addition or alteration of form is so because it *cannot be itself.* Such is the in-built teleology of slow food — of what it can eventually become — if it is given the opportunity to be as such. The energy and liveliness of food is drawn to parallel the liveliness of humans.

And it is not only letting a commodity be itself, but by virtue that an exchange needs to be effected, that the commodity is actually valued for being such as it is:

> We ought to value food on a different basis than its rarity or its sophistication or the fact that people will become impressed with me if I eat it. We ought to value it for itself.
>
> (Roger)

> The value of attention to food has got its own interest.
>
> (Cheryl M)

> You can give a great piece of fish to a chef and have (her/him) muck it up just by trying to do the chef thing when what the fish wants to do is be what it wants to be.
>
> (Jon)

Here the representation of the food is not in terms of its sign value but its precise value in being itself: it has its own interest. The commodity is not just its image, opposed to its reality, but the fuse that constitutes them both. The representation is not that which supersedes the commodity but in fact travels with its sensible and material matter.

There is also a related sense of value being employed. This regards the distribution of value away from the food produce that wants to be. It is an evacuation of value from the food commodity as a result of the process the produce undertakes to become a particular food commodity:

> Added value is a great marketing misnomer because...the definition of added value is how much of the mark-up you can put on something.
>
> (Wendy)

> Sometimes a price indicates there's a plane ticket involved.
>
> (Peter)

Pre-packaged (food) pretends to be easier, but doesn't give people as much energy, doesn't taste as good, costs more...they have to make it with five times as much packaging so that you can rip it open, throw it on the microwave.

(Krista)

When you figure out what a happy meal costs for the kids, and ninety-seven percent of the cost is in the packaging, and the little toy that goes into it...you take that out of the picture and you're getting very little nutrition on that dollar.

(Charles)

Here, the frills that deliver the commodity to the consumer are considered unnecessary, or at least have to be explicated for what they are — extras that in some way detract from the value of the food itself, for adulterated food gives little nourishment 'for the dollar'. This is contrasted to a 'peasant delicacy' of head-cheeses that Leonard described as his favourite food:

"Take a pig's head after you've butchered the pig and break it up — the whole head, everything in it — and cook it for a good long time. And then you take the meat off the bone, and because of the different juices in the head, you've made a gelatine-like subject, and all these pieces that were the head congeals and...you add herbs and spices to it, and it makes this nice solid piece. It's flavoured differently by each person who makes it...Why do I love head-cheese? Well, it's because I love the way the gelatine dissolves in my mouth. I love the way the unspeakable meat products have a sort of chewiness to them...I don't go looking for special effects but...I'm convinced younger folks in this country don't even know that kind of thing exists, that kind of diversity (because) it's not flavoured with salt and ground meat."

I pick up on this example not because head-cheese is a rare food, but rather to show how a commodity can be valued for what it is, namely, the pig. It is not the congealing of the juices per se but the congealing of the animal and all that it is which goes into making this product. Each head-cheese is particular to the said commodity — mostly made and sold at butcher shops from which the 'unspeakable meat' originates. Hence, the value of the product is not in the 'special effects' but sold at a price, and an understanding, that is reflective of itself as well as the labour of the butcher.

1.1.2 Marx and exchange values

Interviewees observing the slow commodity have conceived of commodity value in roughly two ways. One, they have highlighted the value 'in itself', value embodying itself in the commodity that can be observed at its 'height of development' and

'unadulterated' which is both 'simple and complex'. Two, they have looked at the paradoxical evacuation of value from a commodity when the 'added' value affixed for profits' sake actually 'takes away' from the commodity's own value. Conceiving of the commodity in terms of value, as use and exchange values, places us squarely in the territory of Marx, and indeed his appraisal of the commodity. From the onset of his book Capital: Volume 1 he clearly states his fundamental concern with human sociality and their relation with things:

> "The wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an immense collection of commodities"
>
> (Marx, 1867/1976: 125)

If we are not able to return to the 'organic' society he (sometimes) romanticises, Marx's exposition of living within capitalist society hinges on using, at the very least, the *commonality of spirit* (see Appadurai, 1986: 10, original emphasis) that the object-centred society affords to see to it that "a man [sic] must produce use values for others, social use values" (Marx, 1976: 48). This notion appears to conflict with the idea of a "mystical character" (ibid: 163) encased in the commodity form, the socio-natural property as things that take on the 'life' of the worker's labour even as they simultaneously 'veil' the individual (and society) from the traces of labour invested in the product. So while the workers may think that their embodied labours brought in relation to another's are merely objective, material integuments of homogeneous human labour, they fail to see that it is in their engagement with the external sensuous world during the activity of production that things then appropriate at the workers' expense (Marx, 1867/1976; 1975). Marx therefore speaks derisively of the supra-sensible that is supposed to be of human social relations but is instead transferred to and dictated by objects. It is this estrangement of objects from their labour that leads to what he calls the commodity fetishism.

To unveil the fetish, Marx chooses an economy-based analysis to explicate the relationship between humans and commodities. Specifically, he sets up the distinction between use and exchange values. In the former, the transacting of 'C – M – C^{1}', that is, the sales of commodities for money in order to buy commodities, is

stable. As Mohun (1977) asserts, there is symmetry ($C=C^1$) in this relationship of exchange and a display of freedom, equality, property and Bentham. If however the driving force of the transactions is in the form '$M - C - M^1$', where the advancement of money capital is to buy and produce commodities for the sake of profit, there is asymmetry ($M < M^1$) in the relationship, and one skewed to the detriment of labour. Why is this so? If we consider as previously stated the transference of 'life' from worker to goods, it follows that the goods that are produced for exchange (not use, or use for others) now exceed the value of its initial input. And this is because labour is now considered a commodity, albeit a "peculiarly unique commodity in that its use-value has the property of creating more than necessary to reproduce itself" (Mohun, 1977: 141). Thus, because it is profit that is driving the equation, it becomes a vicious cycle that with each turn not only results in squeezing and tightening the belt of the worker who made the commodity, but also means that the concentration of value per unit time effectively redistributes out the value of each unit of commodity in that time period. In a sense then, both the worker and the individual product are devalued. As Sayer (2003) argues, use values are qualitative while exchange values are quantitative. It is no coincidence that an archetypal image here may be that of a migrant worker in a factory producing mass, industrialised food. This, after all, is food cultivated in a landscape of replicable uniformity.

How may one rectify this state of affairs? There are implicit and explicit calls to impose the ideology underlying use value over that of exchange; measures to unveil this process of systematic exploitation or at the very least lay bare the terms in which commodity exchanges take place. Mostly, these are calls to overturn the problems associated with privileging of exchange over use values. But what if the steps taken to unveil this fetishism were based not on the making of this dichotomy — of use over exchange or exchange over use, qualitative or quantitative differences - but rather on their very inseparability? Perhaps the issue here is less of whether use or exchange per se should dominate, but rather how one may harness the 'value' that may be found in either in an effort not to acquiesce but properly commensurate with all parties involved. For even as Miller (2000) suggests, the reason the term 'value' is so well regarded is that in its ambiguous and colloquial sense, it manages to elide

any simple distinction between monetary and gift to fully perform the commodity. Value then is not self-defined but relative to its circumstance: indeed it is often only in the process of exchange itself that value is created (Strathern, 1988).

SF interviewees have alluded to the presence of certain values such as the 'vine-ripened' or 'heirloom' quality of tomatoes as representing the terms under which an exchange may occur. Beyond examining the commodity itself however, it is also important to keep in mind the question that Crang (1996: 64) succinctly posed, namely: What homological valuations exist across commodity-specific systems? It is thus important to consider the factors that go into creating the commodity, and the market to which the exchange is brought to bear.

1.1.3 Land, labour, and the market

The butcher that Leonard mentioned earlier sits at the apex of transforming pig into head-cheese, using an increasingly marginalised portion of an animal to make a viable commodity whose distinctiveness arises from the pig as well as the butcher. Here, I wish to focus on the process in the making of the commodity by focusing on the factors of labour, land and market as governing the terms of exchange that keep a commodity such as head-cheeses in circulation.

If it is integral that the slow commodity is allowed to fully be itself, it is also the case that producers of the food themselves share this understanding. So while many are adamant on starting up with the 'right' ingredients (quality and freshness among other things), there is concurrent leeway given to allow the food produce to take shape. This was expressed by James, a baker, and June, a jam maker, respectively:

> It's hard to hide your mistakes...you do your best to control the elements, but ultimately it is going to do what it is going to do, and in that unpredictability, I think it keeps bakers humble.
>
> (James)

> I'm getting more confident that if I get a fruit in, I don't have to do what I had to in the past...It's all about saying: this fruit is so exceptionally beautiful, I can poach the whole thing and put it in a jar, or this fruit has to go into a conserve...it's all about making peace with the fruit.
>
> (June)

One should not assume, however, that it is always the case that anyone can just let produce be. There are ways of accentuating the qualities of food that bring slow commodities into being. A vital component here is the skill that the producers impart into the commodities: the skill of the labourer here is less in its 'more than necessary' capacity to reproduce itself (see Mohun, 1977), and more in the 'what is necessary' to both create and be creative of itself. In the former instance, Peter, a chef in the Napa Valley, tells me of the symbiotic relationship that farmers form with cooks and restaurateurs such that certain farmers now tailor their vegetable produce to only what is wanted by their core restaurants. There is a level of skill involved in producing to the specific demand that is needed coupled with an agreement as to what the value of the produce should be. Simultaneously, farmers may themselves be a driving force in actually growing certain produce first, which then piques the interest of the cooks. The necessity for producers to create and be creative is intertwined. For example, a member recounted being impressed with the organic methods used at a peach farm in their control of pests. Rather than pesticides, the farmers employed various pheromones to keep pests away from the peaches or at least lure them to another site away from the fruits. Even producers who, for a variety of reasons, either cannot or choose not to be certified organic may still address some of its underlying principles. Dave, a vineyard manager, speaks of how pro-active steps in hand-clipping certain clusters of grapes greatly reduce the risk of rot and consequently the need for pre-emptive chemical spraying. Creative labour is observed to break down the dichotomy between productivity and creativity, leading to what Miller (2000: 82) calls the "raw creativity of social actors in inventing the conditions for the birth of value".

It is not only incumbent on the skills and creativity of labour to condition this 'birth of value', for land as a factor of production is particularly important here. In her analyses of organic agriculture in California, Guthman (2002, 2003) examines the ways in which the symbolic and biological content of land may intervene in the accumulation process by allowing certain rent-seeking opportunities to occur. She argues that it is in the translations of ideological distinctions and political meanings

of organic produce into surplus value, and vice versa, that give farmers rent as excess profits and hence the possibility of growing organic produce less intensively.

Economic rent may be a reason that agricultural land is used to grow particular crops in a certain style - in this case organically – but it is only one of many. More harmonious with a slow philosophy is the valuing of land not solely on the grounds of the economic profit it earns but, underpinned by concerns relating to sustainability, in regard to environmental and social factors. Members and food producers speak of respect for the land. This manifests itself in practices such as fallowing, multi-cropping and other practices borne variously of traditional husbandry or reflecting, more esoterically, philosophical ideas. One example of this relates to moving chickens in pens around a field frequently. This protects the chickens from predators, ensures them fresher grazing material and provides the soil with an even distribution (rather than burden) of nitrogen-rich manure. That variations on this method are practised by traditional farms and on newer permaculture farms attests to a general quest for economically viable, 'good' farming practice.

In mentioning both organic and permaculture practices, I do not wish to suggest that they are exactly the motives of SFM, but that therein lies ideas which may run concurrently with a slow philosophy. Such practices and philosophies are guided by a flexibly implemented trinity of concepts, namely: tradition, terroir and typicality. In descending order, these concepts are seen to hold in esteem the weight of time and culture. In ascending order, they accommodate changes in land use for agriculture while maintaining sensitivity to local place distinctions. All in all, they demonstrate in no uncertain terms the inextricable ties between land and labour. Commodities produced on this land in the spirit of slowness reflect the productive creativity of labour, just as there is required the support of this very labour to highlight the fecundity of the land. Amidst all this, it is no small matter that the respect for the land is manifested in practices of caring for it. Feminist research has shown that caring labour continues to be productive of itself (Elson, 1977) even when artificial divides have been drawn between work and home spaces (Hanson & Pratt, 1995; England, 1996) and in spite of recent welfare changes under neo-liberal policies in the

USA (Boyer, 2003) and UK (McDowell, 2004). Such a feminist stance is close to the heart of SFM when one considers that female farmers in the West are three times more likely to be operating sustainable farms (Trauger, 2004). It is also relevant given that for women (and men) the farm can be both work and home space, and that a sizeable proportion of SF members live in countries where the political climate of neo-liberalism is dominant. What Marx so disapprovingly referred to as the reification of sensuous activity in commodities may actually be positively viewed in these practices of care. They present themselves as existing in fluid motion between land and labour, enhancing the terms of exchange of the slow commodity.

The slow commodity then is not calculated simply in terms of the yield of land or the efficiency of labour but the recognised embodiment of a range of factors which coalesce around its terms of exchange. Furthermore, the fact that these factors will be included in the commensuration of these terms at transaction point and place is testament to the sort of market in which slow commodities are traded. It is often stated, for instance, that the market is the driving wedge between production and consumption (Slater, 2003). As such, the visibility and transparency of the terms in which the producers grow their food, and the understandings with which consumers buy this food is paramount. Indeed, one of SF's aims is to be platform on which both producers and consumers can lay bare the terms of exchange on which they can agree. Presented as a simplified measure of exchange *sans* market, the ideal solution would be to situate the market exactly at the confluence of production and consumption.

Realistically it is not always possible to conduct the exchange of slow commodities at this confluence of market space. Rather, what might be considered is the *extent* to which such an exchange is possible considering the actual, physical space of a market and the conditions under which that market is formed. Let us consider what makes a 'market'. Mitchell (2001: 244) states that:

> The power of the market economy reveals itself not only in the transforming of people's lives and livelihoods but in its influence over the way we think. It is one of those ideas that we seem able to grasp only in terms that the phenomena itself dictates.

The market then appears as a self-fulfilling condition — we think it into acting the way we think it does. In doing so, Callon (1998) further argues, we allow the market to work as a frame protecting itself from those 'cultural' factors that need to be kept extraneous to it (Callon, 1998). Such normative concepts of the market lead to a naturalising of what Appadurai (1986:4) terms "regimes of value". However, this should not mistakenly persuade one to hark back to a time when sole individuals conducted a natural economy of simple exchanges of goods, wealth and products. As Mauss (1990) shows, such an economy never existed. Thus, in addition to those one-to-one exchanges that might take place, markets may perform a stabilising context for the transacting of slow commodities insofar as there are efforts made to discern more clearly the conditions under which such markets operate.

Fig 2: Brochure of the Cheddar Cheese Presidium, undated

I wish at this juncture to use a case study of the cheddar cheese to illustrate a slow commodity type in action. Specifically, this example relates to SF's Cheddar Cheese Presidium which was formed in 2002 to protect the artisan cheese produced in the traditional region of county Somerset, UK surrounding the ancient town of Cheddar. At present the presidium comprises three farmstead cheeses and their corresponding cheese-makers – Keen's of Moorhayes Farm, Montgomery's at Manor Farm and Calver's at Westcombe. Though there are recorded histories since the Middle Ages of cheddar-type cheeses, these three farms represent a smattering of the farms left

(barely five percent from the four hundred or so in production fifty years ago) in the region still making cheddar in its traditional, handmade form.

There are some important symbolic aspects of this presidium that warrant detailing. Firstly, there is little doubt that cheeses play a central food commodity role in SF. On its formation as an international organisation, one of SF's first official stances was to 'defend' raw milk cheeses. This invocation was written as a manifesto and carried out in light of the global hygiene controls held in place by the European Union, World Trade Organisation, United States' Food and Drug Administration and various government institutions. The main contention was that laws relating to sterilisation procedures were overzealously applied to favour the production of homogeneous, industrial cheeses over smaller, artisan ones. For example, the mandatory implementation of pasteurised milk was unnecessary because not only did many farms have in place long-standing, sensible practices which guarded against disease and contamination, but such a ruling meant ironing out, by virtue of the high heat application to the milk, different aromas and flavours in cheese that made each one of them unique. Cheddar is one such raw milk cheese whose complexity and depth of flavour is attributed to the vagaries of the milk. Secondly, this product shares its names with one of the most recognisable and ubiquitous cheeses made popular the world over by companies such as Kraft. But Somerset cheddar is not at all like the ubiquitous cheddar. In creating this presidium, SF aimed to foreground a cheese type that is known to both the mass market and the informed consumer to show how, despite sharing a lineage, industrial cheeses have overtaken and led to the downfall of this artisan cheese. Last, it was considered apt and a testament to hope that, at the first UK presidium, one might plunge into the abysmal foodways of the first industrialised nation of the world and still uncover existing artisan food and practices.

The process of making 'real farmstead cheddar', as it is sometimes called, involves the milk used coming entirely from the herd of farm-bred cows. Montgomery, for example, both breeds the cows and makes the cheese. He is continually improving his Friesian herd to breed higher milk fats favourable to the cheese. Because the

cheese has to be made within one day of milking, and the cows in the farms are milked almost daily, the flavour of the cheese will be reflective of the land on which they graze, the seasonality, and more generally of the daily diet of the cows. As is traditional, starter cultures —essentially old strains of bacteria based on the local micro flora — and rennet are added to the milk to create curd. As the curd starts to form, workers on the farm start the laborious process of stacking the slabs of curd on top of each other and turning them by hand in an attempt to expel the whey. In this way, an increasingly tighter texture is formed. This process, which is known as cheddaring, usually takes about an hour, but the actual duration is dependent on the tactility of the workers who have to make sure the right density and texture is achieved. Cheddar produced this way is at once slightly flaky and crumbly, but also pliable and elastic. Following this, the cheese is salted, put into moulds and pressed together in a process which lasts two days. It is then carefully bound in muslin or in Montgomery's case, linen-cotton cloth, an expense not usually disbursed by mass-produced cheese companies. This keeps the cylindrical shape of the cheese and, more importantly, allows for the regulation of moisture and the slow formation of a natural crust and moulds over the eleven months minimum period of ageing.

The resulting tastes of the cheddars are varied. Even when made by the same cheese-maker, each truckle[3] is different depending on the conditions present on the day it is made. Its value, measured by its taste, is a combination of the qualities of cows, farmland and weather, and the skill of the cheese-makers involved in the process. The taste does not rest on top of the cheese but travels and changes through the cheese itself. Rather than a sharp, uniform taste that we might associate with mass-produced cheddar — a taste which goes away as quickly as it is swallowed — artisan cheddar is identified palatally by its depth of flavour and lingering complexity. Often it will start off mildly sweet, but the flavour will build in the mouth such that the sweetness will now be more buttery and caramelized, with a combination of perhaps fruitiness, bitter herbs and hazelnuts all happening at once, remaining in the mouth even after the cheese has been swallowed. For consumers of real cheddar, the precise

[3] A truckle refers to barrel-shaped cheeses. A truckle of cheddar here is approximately 40cm in diameter, 30cm high, and 25kg in weight.

value of the cheese is in the sensuous pleasure it affords them. It is valued for tastes which change with time, not only in the mouth but also, from day to day, characteristics made up of factors intervening in its lengthy ageing process.

Particularly credited for making visible the presidium's cheddar and their cheese-makers is Randolph Hodgson, owner of the highly regarded Neal's Dairy Yard – retail shops in Covent Garden and the Borough Market in London that specialise in British cheeses. The partnership is a long-standing one. Randolph joined the shop as a summer intern during his university days in the 1970s. From the early days, he was in contact with the cheddar cheese-makers. The presidium he has forged with the three cheese-makers represents an additional step in their collaborative efforts. Randolph personally visits the farms to taste out the different batches of cheeses, something he has been doing for the last fifteen years, meticulously recording down the quality and taste references for each day's product. With constant feedback and conversations between him and the cheese-makers, the cheddar is borne out of their mutual agreements and understandings of what makes the artisan cheddar the way it is, and correspondingly, its value. One recent challenge he posed to the presidium cheese-makers, for instance, was to scrap the use of milk powder in an attempt to follow more closely the tradition of using only milk from their own cows. He speaks fondly of the first meeting that was held in view of forming a presidium. Gathering around the table, evaluating traditions and deciding on criteria, he says, was the most important step in determining the creation of the value of real cheddar. It is perhaps not surprising that, both in Britain and abroad, he is as closely associated with these cheeses as the cheese-makers are.

The market for the presidium's cheddar cheese is Neal's Dairy Yard; his shops the materialisation of the figurative platform that SF speaks about. They are bustling social places. Cheese types are labelled with the name of the cheese-maker and/or farm from which they originate. Cheesemongers patiently taste out the various cheeses whilst giving a run-down of the pertinent characteristics of each cheese; customers are coaxed into trying cheeses they have an expressed aversion to. For Randolph, the hardest part is getting the cheese into people's mouth as stereotypes

and bad experiences form the major hurdles. Once in the mouth, however, the battle is usually won. He speaks with satisfaction of the oft-seen motion of people putting the cheeses in their mouths and turning away, only for them to take a step back and return with interest to the cheese as it makes itself known through the pleasingly complex taste that it provides. Prices displayed mirror the effort that has gone into the cheeses, but they seem secondary to the cheese that mediates cheesemonger and consumer. The cheeses are bought in untidy quantities of slices and slabs, each suiting the particular needs of the consumer. People from different walks of life converge; business-attired figures as well as fruit and vegetable retailers from the nearby market. I am told that when the Jubilee underground line was being built, the main clientele were in fact the construction workers. Finally, the cheese-makers themselves are as thoroughly entwined with this market as they are with their cheeses. More than merely names that appear next to their cheeses, they often travel with the cheeses to promote their produce. For example, they accompanied Randolph, representing Neal's Dairy Yard, to the recent Cheese festival in Bra which drew a crowd of a hundred and twenty thousand people over five days. Over this period, four hundred kilograms of cheddar were sampled and eight hundred kilograms bought (SF Press Release, 22 September 2003). The cheese-makers then are part of the cheddar that stretches out in time and space between the status of gift (tasting) and commodity (buying). The appreciation of their cheddar shown by visitors to the festival and other cheese-makers reinforces their self-worth as artisan cheese producers. This appreciation is an expression of the social lives of both humans and things and on which is founded the terms of exchange of this slow commodity.

4.4 Commodification and Politics of Nature

Slow food commodities demonstrate a particular foray into the domain of nature. To speak of 'nature', however, is to refer to a range of 'rather different sets of things' (Castree, 2003b) that may not co-relate, and indeed even have irreconcilable differences with one another. The attention then is drawn to the processes involved in commodifying and making political 'SF natures' in particular ways.

First nature, as this is sometimes referred to as, is the wilderness 'out there', the untouched physical properties of an environment valued for its "edaphic properties" (Winter, 2005: 611). To an extent, the activation and usage of concepts such as terroir, as discussed earlier, mirror this view. It is also telling that in the formation of the Cheddar Cheese Presidium, for example, the promotional language used evokes a sense of a bucolic, idyllic rural, a countryside that is also considered the domain of unsullied and often, unbroken tradition. There is, in other words, a denoting of authenticity and provenance (Hughes & Reimer, 2004; Jackson et al, 2006). Out of this is nature that is about to become food: ideas of tradition and proprietary are seen here to 'cook' nature into a more viable landscape (Oakes, 1999).

The viability of nature results from a nature that is, in some sense, transformed: second nature. Fitzsimmons (1989) urges a critical eye towards this 'matter of nature' wherein nature now becomes a resource, a condition of production and importantly, a commodity. Nature considered thus is two fold. There is attention to the 'production of nature' (Smith, 1984) as there is to nature's own "generative capacities" (Bakker & Bridge, 2006: 6). Framed within a Marxist-oriented politics, a commodification of nature would suggest an encroachment of capital, onto nature, which then takes on the tangibly physical form of a commodity. The elements of nature in this commodity are held to be crucial to its value and terms of exchange (Castree, 2004); and more than that, as these 'natural' elements may be physically altered to suit requirements of profit in a process that Watts (2000: 300) calls "real subsumption".

Within SF, responses towards the figuring in of 'capital' take place in a number of ways.

Interviewees talked about 'defending nature', speaking confidently on issues such as bio-piracy or bioprospecting undertaken by companies they had heard of and when these issues had been featured through the media, or had been discussed among peers or within the SFM itself. For instance, several interviewees mentioned they were familiar with the campaign spearheaded by scientist/activist Vandana Shiva regarding the foreign patenting of the Indian basmati rice and expressed strong

views against these patents. On the other hand, interviewees were less circumspect about other kinds of food-nature commodities such as global heirloom-seed varieties and fair trade produce, mentioning their frequent and willing purchase of these products. Though it was clear that these purchases were borne of good intentions, it also showed that their stance on 'defending nature' was wrought from standpoints that implicitly reflected 'first world' bias. Bryant and Goodman (2004) and Dolan (2009), for instance, describe the paternalistic devices in fair trade schemes that are conceived and delivered by advanced economies. Similarly, McAfee (1999) has shown that what she calls 'green developmentalism' has often obscured North-South inequalities, reinforcing claims of global elites to a greater share of earth's resources. Suffice to say, then, that responses to nature transformed into commodity take place in uneven ways.

In observing nature transformed and commodified, and the ways in which SF members actively contribute to these transformation and commodification processes, it may be fair to assert that nature is more accurately 'socionature' (Swyngedouw, 1999; Castree, 2001). Demeritt (1998) refers to this entwined social-nature as 'artefactual natures', recognising that accessing, evaluating or affecting nature must in one way or another involve some socially specific knowledge and practice. In the case of the Cheddar Cheese Presidium, following the milk from the cow to the transformed cheese that enters the consumer's mouth allows one to not merely outline but emphasise and reveal the different traces of production that linger in the experience of consumption (Cook, 2004).

Doing so, in effect, serves to right the spatiotemporal separation between nature and the commodities that are seen to contain this natural form (Casetree, 2003; see also, Hartwick, 1998).

We may use the example of the ubiquitous tomato discussed earlier to show how the varying ideas of nature – in spite of their apparent incongruous meanings – combines with the commodity in strands that are pulled together to benefit SF. To speak, as Valerie did, of 'drop(ing) a fresh vine-ripened tomato to every American' is to appeal to an entity perceived to be universal, and understood as such. This is first nature, set

as external to daily life (the need to 'drop' it in to those who were unaware of it). It is also intrinsic nature (see Castree, 2001), for in what Hsiao Ching calls its ability to be 'more representative of (itself)', it appears to speak, naturally, of itself and its characteristics. The tomato also figures as second nature. The production, construction and consumption of the tomato necessitate consideration of its metabolic transformation (Swyngedouw, 1999; Gandy, 2002) into something of (food) value, taking into account its specific ecological, biophysical and social processes. SF members have mobilised ideas of size, colour and state (freshness) in what can be considered naturalisations of the ideal tomato. They have paired these naturalisations, furthermore, with ideas approaching artificiality that may be contra-nature: 'baseball' tomatoes, for instance. In this, it may be argued that the materiality of the tomato is specific and irreducible – different natures are sought, and consumed differently (see Castree, 2003b). And yet, these characteristics are also characteristics that may pertain to food in general. They are indicative of what Franklin, Lury and Stacey (2000) describe as a global imaginary of nature, undergoing processes of de-naturalisation and re-naturalisation in an attempt to foreground tomato's 'nature' in appropriate contexts. One may consider the discourses made around food entities to follow certain understandings. For instance, the 'seed' of heirloom tomato varieties has been described as a means of securing nature, speaking to an authenticity that appears to exceed contemporary/western/fast culture. The 'seed' of a genetically-modified corn, in contrast, may be made 'unnatural' through social processes in which it is deemed no more than a vehicle for accumulation due to its "increasing capacity...to integrate accelerated returns into the circuits of capital" (Bakker & Bridge, 2006: 10). The range of opinions that are formed around what does or does not make a tomato – slow or otherwise - point towards a socionature that is at once normative and political.

The SF member here is thus a consumer thoroughly imputed in nature. Often, in staking their claims or making known to me their normative and/or political values, they have actively made and re-made concepts of food-natures through varied and differentiated understandings. How a SF consumer acts and reacts, furthermore, stretches beyond individualistic standpoints and identities. As Clarke (2008) has

found in studies undertaken on issues pertaining to ethical consumerism and political consumption, consumption practices did not so much mirror the practices of a rational, autonomous and self-identified consumer as show up the collective practices brought about by social networks, material (place) infrastructures and political organisations. In the case of SF members, I found the case to be mixed, depending on a range of individual/collective identifications and practices in their consumption of natural, slow food entities. What appears less unflinching, overall, was that consumption in and of itself of these slow food types was considered the primary form of action undertaken towards a range of causes in which nature, or the natural element, of the commodity figured prominently (see also Bryant & Goodman, 2004).

4.5 Social lives, political assemblages

Commodities evidently have a life that may be spoken of in social and political terms. It is evident, in the first instance, that commodities extend beyond their chain-linking effects. As they travel between production and consumption, the commodity is the very social relation of the market righting the "ontological apartheid" (Clarke et al, 2003: 22) between objects and subjects. So while the trajectory of their social lives may overlap with existing systems of provision, these are by no means the one and same thing. On the one hand, there is drawn together the relation of things with humans, founded on their mediating and historical/biographical sociality with humans. This is the context in which is recognized commodities' relation to other (non-human) things. On the other hand, these various things can be seen to 'fall' in and out of social lives. A piece of unwanted food that is not taken notice of – perhaps not bought by a shopper, perhaps not even making the quality control grade necessary to be transferred to a supermarket – may not figure in the social life that is being studied. What is the status of an entity deemed not slow food worthy? Is there life yet in the entity waiting to be enrolled in the SFM? Even when they do not figure in specific 'social lives', these things still sit somewhere – there is a certain material intransigence of things. Hence, there is observed a tension between their social

mediation and their actual, unwavering presence within and outside of commodity circuits.

The extent to which the commodity's presence is made visible socially or via commodity circuits (or as an overlap of them both) may be suitably enunciated by the concepts of social potential (Appadurai, 1986) and affordance (Gibson, 1979). In a general sense, the social potential of a commodity is what distinguishes it from mere objects or artefacts - the certain aspect of it that appeals to the social, the specific situation it finds itself in, and the point of view from which it is seen. What enables this visibility is contingent on the embodied relations that both the human and commodity bring to bear. In Gibson's terminology, it is what objects/ subjects and the environment in which they are held *afford* each other. Affordance then is what entities — be they human, commodity or environment — offer, provide, furnish, invite, and dispose to each other. Conceptually-speaking affordance modulating the aforementioned ontological apartheid as objects and subjects are indistinguishable. This notion relates to the perceptible awareness that is created when 'ecological information' is sought, detected and/or found. It is a measure of being attuned to a distributed representation whose meaning induces an entity to action (see Roe, 2002). As Norman (1988: 9) asserts, affordances are the "perceived and actual properties ... fundamental properties that ... (provide) strong clues to the operations of things". Affordances, however, are not infinite. The existence of affordances is constrained by the materiality of entities; equally, it may be argued that materiality is nothing but the sum total of their affordances (Harré 2002). The social potential and affordance of a commodity then may be considered both an endowment and expression of itself.

Understanding the visibility of the commodity as such lays the groundwork for what Appadurai (1986: 13) calls "commodity candidacy", that is, the standards and criteria (typological, symbolic, material) that define the exchangeability of things in any social/historical context. The moment that happens, a commodity may be considered as moving into a 'state' of being which may be defined as its 'commodity phase'. As mentioned, it is possible to move in and out of this state. In fact, it is common - even encouraged - that certain commodities such as second-hand clothing engage in

multiple movements in and out of commodity chains such that they are infused with different social lives and histories which may have an effect of re-enchantment (Gregson et al, 2000). The limit to which this logic may be applied to food commodities is contingent on its 'use-by' date. It is evident that, for better or for worse, the narratives and histories that accompany a food commodity impact on its candidacy. The commodity may be defined in terms of its movement, physical transformation and the traffic of people it has encountered. Because they are generally perishable, the precise moment of commencement of the commodity phase is important for food commodities. Notwithstanding this, some commodities may be marked by their reversibility, just as others are known by their terminal nature. It may be that food commodities have undergone a process that has lengthened their lifespan (putting food into cans, for example). The duration of the commodity phase relates to how quickly the food moves from one phase to another. This might be thought about as the length of time it takes for a commodity to form its biography and effect its social potential and affordance. The commodity phase is terminated by food simply being eaten. Putting all these considerations together, the 'commodity context' refers to the social arenas that link the commodity candidacy of a thing to the commodity phase of its career. It is in this arena that determination of the commodity allows for the terms of exchange to occur.

These considerations are played out clearly in the case of the Cheddar Cheese Presidium mentioned earlier. The ability for the term 'cheddar' to mean cheese in at least two different ways – as artisan or industrial food – has been premised on their mattering in different social lives. Whether through food tradition and land provenance (artisan) or industrial food networks (industrial), the stubborn materiality of cheddar has allowed them the potential and affordances to exist (or not) in varying social lives. It is this aspect of real cheddar that SF has been able to use to good effect. What counts for commodity candidacy in this case here are plenty: one may pick the unique traditional-historical factors as much as the physical presence of a good understanding between Friesian cow, environment and the cheesemaker's hands. It may also have to do with Randolph, of which the highlighted meeting around the table with the respective cheesemakers and the ironing out of details

regarding the milk requirements were considered pivotal to strengthening the 'candidacy' of cheddar within SF. And it is not only second hand goods that can be re-enchanted for, as Randolph mentions, the cheese is able to represent itself and re-enter an hitherto unwilling consumer's mouth, making a possible reintroduction into their lives.

The commodity type, as one begins to unpack its journey, may be considered an assemblage built from social interactions. One aspect that may be looked at, as Mansfield (2003) does, is product quality which she asserts is not borne of pure objective measures or subjective judgements but is instead an assemblage of interactions at multiple stages of commodity chains. The assemblage then, may be more generally thought of as a "coming together of artefacts, bodies and things in a complex, nonlinear, and heterogeneous fashion...an emerging collectivity in which the processes of its formation and expression do not threaten the identity of the individual components" (Tay, 2009: 505). One may place Randolph squarely within this assemblage and the characteristics that he comports and brings to the cheddar that often border on their (consumer) invisibility. There is, for instance, his skill as an affineur, and the manner in which he tastes, records, chooses and ripens the cheeses that lends to the renown of the cheddar cheeses showcased. Alison, for example, who imported cheese into Seattle, enthusiastically told me about what she felt was the higher quality of Montgomery's cheddar when it came through Randolph's shop, Neal's Dairy Yard. Indeed, one may consider his shop as part of an assemblage in both physical and metaphorical sense. For it is not only a location on which people and cheese may coincide, but also a space of dialogue: with cheesemakers, enthusiasts, loyal customers, and passer-bys.

An assemblage, in other words, is created out of entities gelling and coming together in a fashion that propels the assemblage forward, requiring knowledge practices that constitute the commodity's social context. The terms of exchange which are commensurate with the methodologies regarding how to go about doing it, what to do and why, are uneven. According to Appadurai (1986), this is a result of tensions between knowledge and ignorance, signalling the peculiarities of knowledge in a

relatively complex, possibly long-distance and often intercultural flow of things. Sometimes gaps in knowledge and difficulties in communication between producers and consumers are not really obstacles as there might be "a series of small, overlapping circles of knowledge which can link original producer and terminal consumer" (1986: 43). In the case of Randolph, we may trace how he has clear – but not total - knowledge of the cheesemakers' day-to-day operations, which he may then use to good effect in communication about the cheese to the consumer. The consumer will now know something about the cheese, but it will be nowhere near as in-depth as Randolph does. Conversely, it may also be the case that the consumer is one who knows cheddar cheese intimately, having some knowledge beyond Randolph's expertise, prompting some common ground on which they may engage in an exchange of knowledge. For instance, Alison, the cheese importer, on her part, signalled to this sentiment of common ground when she then told me about how she had also relayed information about some interesting American cheeses back to Randolph.

Other times the discontinuities in knowledge can bring about problems involving authenticity and expertise. Of course, to frame it as such is arguably an oversimplification of matters. Authenticity and expertise are as much about balancing a complex range of criteria as they are about veracity. What needs to be acknowledged, however, is that notwithstanding the nature of these knowledges, they are formed in mutual co-production with people and things alike. As things afford people and their surroundings their social being, there is likewise an onus on humans themselves to do the same. This is a central tenet of SF. Because there is no snail logo affixed to associated slow products, there is presented an invitation to members to uncover and discover the lives of products that make them 'slow' in tandem with the work carried out by the organisation and other members around the world. Knowledge here is not just dependent on a formal sense of good taste and social distinction (see Bourdieu, 1984) but on the material and bodily knowledge that is of things, humans and the surrounding environment. This, in other words, is active, moving knowledge that is utilised by commodity assemblages.

The determination of this knowledge is one of the things that delineates the politics of this assemblage. The nature/natural within this assemblage arises from the social knowledge that is created from the varying desires and degrees of 'naturalness'. Knowledge may also be created by a pact between nature, tradition and politics such as that of the 'PDO' and 'PGI' labels for food entities that have been formed within European food governance schemes, aimed specifically at legally protecting designated regional foods (see Parrott et al, 2002), though the relationship of such knowledge with that formed within SF is, at best, ambiguous.

Knowledge of a different sort may also marshal the assemblage into being/performing. As mentioned, 'righting this ontological apartheid' is a significant political intervention. On the one hand, exposing the mediation and sociality of commodities appears to make visible any possible exploitation that may occur in the journey from production to consumption. On the other hand, calling forth for certain types of commodities processes – even taking pains to consider all points within the network (Cook, 2004) – may lead to making visible certain commodities at the expense of other invisible commodities/processes that may warrant attention. The iconic tomato, for instance, is a well-rehearsed example whose usefulness as a showcase entity may be outweighed by the need to introduce a range of lesser-known but more endangered foods types.

Lastly, if one of the political challenges in regarding the lives of slow, social commodities is to "get in touch with the fetish" (Taussig, in Cook & Crang, 1996: 147), it would also be necessary to consider two final aspects that influence the assemblage. One is that the terms of exchange for a commodity are complex and often transacted over a range of agreements and understandings, of which monetary value is only one of them. As demonstrated, there is a preference in examining and dealing with a typology of commodities that is distinguished from mass-produced foods. In this is observed, more generally, the valuing of individual quality over mass quantity. There is a danger that, understood poorly, slow food reinforces the preciousness of food available only to a privileged social stratum. This is not its intention for its valuation of food is forged in a field of factors that emphasises equality — sufficiency

for all – and not excess. This stance implies that the terms of exchange of food in larger fields are often imbalanced and tilted towards inequality. SF takes seriously not only the well-trodden issue of distribution (not quantity) of food on a global level, but also the bodily distribution of food on an individual level. It is not a cruel irony that the monetary value of food increases with knowledge and understanding be the very terms on which equality might be guaranteed. As well, according to SF thinking, there is a need to attend to the propinquity of things and humans to each another because commodity fetishism is not only social but also spatial (Crang, 1996). The intention of SF is to focus on the way in which the local arena draws into close contact the land on which food is grown, the labour that tends to the food-growing process and the market which transacts the food. Two is the consideration of political propinquity in terms of 'reach'. Following Cook and Crang (1996), one may choose to look not at the in-depth social lives of things but at their surfaces. Guided by what they call "radical passivity" (1996: 147) or what I would argue is an intuitive sense of affordances, there is refusal to both construct and foreclose meaning of the commodities at hand. This is perhaps a more accurate way of valuing food for itself. In any case, whether in-depth or surface commodities are preferred, the 'reach' of the commodity has to extend beyond the normalised concept of exchange: more than simply a mediation of a person-to-person exchange, it is food that reaches in to affect the corporeal being. In the same way that contact with SF is effected not simply by transacting food but by tasting and experiencing it, the manifestation of SF commodities is its social life lived in its literal, material and political sense.

4.6 Conclusion – Brand 'Slow Food'?

This chapter has charted the changing roles of commodities and consumers, explicated through Marxist and food 'nature' lenses, taking seriously their material, political, and indeed, their social lives. SF members, on their part, have contributed to the varying ways they understand these social lives, using a variety of means and doings to enact relationships with slow food commodities. These understandings, I assert, actually go some way in adding to what I term as brand 'Slow Food'. Such an assertion may seem paradoxical, in light of the avowedly 'no snail logo' and 'no SF

product' tenets held by the SFM that I mentioned earlier in the chapter. Yet it may be the case that it is these tenets that give SF the flexibility to create a brand that is, in some sense, truer to the purposes underpinning such a cause. One may think of brand 'Slow Food' as strengthened by its diversity of meaning, practices and ideas – though not in a limitless way – to different people and food entities, some of which will be replicable in many places, and all the while being perceived by those who subscribe to it as having a general, non-contradictory mode of affiliation. It is conceivable to members, for instance, that a slow food entity may be formed out of nature, the baker, the environment, and the interactions within an assemblage without one aspect contradicting the other. Yet, at the same time, brand 'Slow Food' is also comfortably set on a premise of what may be termed reverse branding: that is, Slow Food is what it is not. Through the discussions with members, one may consider that a slow food entity is that which is not poor in quality, value for money, dietary, or taste. Intertwining these two broad categories of decidedly social purposes, one may find the emergence, wittingly or unwittingly, of a brand. As Lury (2004: 157) states, "(a) brand emerges from attempts to address and manage precisely those aspects of relations between buyers and sellers that are not governed by price through the use of information about the consumer in processes of product differentiation". Finally, as detailed in the processing of the Cheddar Cheese Presidium, a brand that is to be recognised as 'Slow Food' needs time to make things happen, as it needs time for things to come together. And if this brand is to be a champion against the Marxist ills of displacement and alienation, it needs to flow with this time, demonstrating what Lury (2004: 12) calls "dynamic unity". An exposition on this figure of time – slow time, no less – will be advanced in the chapter to follow.

Chapter 5: Slow Time

5.1 Introduction

> The beam rotated round the top of the tower like every single revolving light. John saw the beam wandering, but he also perceived that the light went on being visible on the right side even as the beam was again swinging back to the left, and that it was still on the left side when it turned up again on the right. Present and past – what had Dr Orme said about that? The light was most fully in the present when, flaring up, it met John's eye directly. Whatever else he saw must have been lit up before and now shone only within his own eye – a light of the past.
>
> (Nadolny, The Discovery of Slowness, 2003 (1983): 37)

Memory — lag time — journey — movement. Given a suitable mode of contemplation, one's awareness can be attuned to the sense that a moving object transfixes time left and right, tracing by virtue of itself degrees of presence and absence. Had one chosen to look elsewhere instead, or not paid sufficient due to John's observation, the event would have passed unnoticed. What does one make of this time-embodied light? Despite sensing its illuminating trajectory, John still defers his knowledge of time to Dr. Orme. Indeed how is it that we, as St. Augustine has suggested, know what time is until the point of having to explain it?

This chapter attends to the intriguing and fascinating notions of time, and builds up a case of how entities, bodies and the movement at large have chosen to comport with time and attune themselves to its slow, temporal qualities. In the first section, I attend to the modern epoch that, I argue, the SFM finds itself in. The discourses of modernity as speed and instantaneity (now) are rehearsed, and the ideas set within a dichotomy of time – modernity as fast and sociality as slow – are examined. The relevance of these time conceptions to a global, local SF time is also shown.

Following this, the rest of the chapter takes a more in-depth view and gestures towards different types of slow time that may be called upon: they are figured in as reactions to, and complements of, dominant time. The first type of slow time considers the notion of reflexivity as an important conduct of time. Reflexivity here advances modernity in specific ways, both accounting for the spillage from strictly

demarcated times as well as an epoch that readily accommodates different speeds and timings. The second type of slow looks at the idea of time consciousness. The parameters of past, present and future are considered using a Deleuzian reading of the philosopher Henri Bergson (1988 (1896); 1999 (1965)). Past, present and future are explicated not (only) as a linear timeline but in specific relations with each other. In addition, they may possess seemingly contrasting characteristics: the past may be generalised as it may also be specific, the present as absolute as it is elusive, the future as a time to become as it is virtual. Each of this is an important consideration in itself as it is in relation to one another, and it is through these considerations that time consciousness is reconfigured. In this second slow time, the notion of duration is also introduced as that which is occupied by slow, conscious time. The third type of slow time follows on by inviting matter into duration. Spatial qualities and their interaction with time are interrogated. Matter here is both a linchpin and an elaboration on this relationship.

In all three times, a single case study, that of Soyoung and her journey in making cheeses, is threaded through the section. A dream-like sequence is used to tell her story, and its historical account will demonstrate how these different referents of time may be conceived, and used, by the SFM. This singular narrative also splices the general and the particular: to be able to find purchase, as Soyoung does, on both these levels separately and in unison is the success and aim of the SFM.

Finally, the time of slow is also a time of rhythm: slow food time arguably reciprocates rhythms by elucidating and promoting the movement of slow. My concern with this relationship then turns to centre on the issue of democracy. Slowly, food is able to make certain relations more equitable. I examine how this may be and what must be done.

5.2 Fast modern life, slow social time

I) Modernity of speed

One narrative of modernity asserts that progress is marked by a colonisation of space. Certainly, with the advance of a bundle of processes often referred to as globalisation,

we appear to have entered, and fulfilled, the "space-conquering" (Simmel, 1950:184) phase of modernity. I say 'fulfilled' in line with Harvey's (1990) famous suggestion (quoting Marx) that there is an "annihilation of space by time', which is invariably the result of 'time-space compressions". This collapse of time-space signals the end of distance as we know it to be. Space is subsumed to produce a fully-extended and extensive present (Adam, 1990). Concomitantly, modernity is now also thought to be time-conquering. The ability to perform a task in quasi-instantaneous time points to the potential of infinitely small fractions of "timeless time... (which can) escape the contexts of its existence" (Castells, 1996: 464). Alongside this, one may similarly choose to 'stack time', achieving what Eriksen (2001) terms the "Lego block syndrome" of modern society.

What is often taken for granted in literatures I have thus far invoked is the assumption that slow time always loses to fast time (see for example Brand, 1999; Eriksen, 2001; Kern, 1983; Serres, 1995). This is the basis of contention for speed theorist Paul Virilio (1986, 1989, 1990), who argues that the sway of 'chronopolitics' has made the modern city function as a 'dromocracy', where the need for speed supersedes wealth as the city's foundation, culture and society at large (Armitage, 1999a:3-4). We live not only in societies of movement, but in the acceleration of that movement, where any reductions of time 'to' (journey) and time 'at' (activity) can only seek to outrun a previous acceleration. In fact, even the "all-at-oneness" of modernist vision (Krauss, in Crary, 1999: 46) is at stake here, for at speeds at which "faith in perception becomes slave to the faith in the technical sightline" (Virilio, 1994: 13, original emphases), the 'sightless vision' that is constantly being produced by speed lends itself to what Virilio (1994: 73) calls the last form of industrialisation: the industrialisation of the non-gaze.

In this modern age, being able to be everywhere at once and nowhere in particular is generally associated with the condition of alienation. There may be alienation as shock when individuals are faced with more stimuli than they can cope with (Benjamin, 1968(1939); Santos, 2001). Speed portends duress on the psyche, leading to the need to shield oneself with a blasé attitude (Simmel, 1950) or, like the audacious

flâneur, to take back the pace of the pedestrian and sardonically walk the streets in the face of this modernity (Benjamin, 1968 (1939)). Even in contemporary times, Giddens (1991; see Lash & Urry, 1994: 40) asserts, the ontological security of the self is achieved through a process of 'bracketing', a kind of sequestering out of the part-self to create order out of chaos. Finally, in parallel with Virilio's (1994) industrialised non-gaze, is the alienation that occurs when we fail to notice that with technology — the culprit of speed — we become alienated from ourselves. Lyotard (1991:15) similarly warns of the takeover of the body by what he called the 'inhuman', bodiless thought shrouded in mere binary logic. Virilio himself attributes the collapse of the boundaries between technology and the human body to the 'transplant revolution', whereby the 'technoscience' makes possible the miniaturisation of objects (like cardiac simulators, resulting in the 'endo-colonisation' of the body (see Armitage, 1999a: 12).

II) Modernity of 'now'

Clocks are metonyms of time. When the time 'now' is evoked, it most often recalls the checking of a wrist watch, mobile phone or the nearest clock. Only sometimes does it call for a larger evaluation of a present situation. While nowadays this measurement of naturalised time is as readily accepted as it is widely vilified, such reactions are not dissimilar to those that have charted the course of time-keeping leading up to the clock.

It is generally recognised that the precursor to clock-time began in medieval, Benedictine monasteries where the tolling of bells to signal prayer times were heard at regular intervals (Adam, 2003; Camporesi, 1998; Crang, 2001; Eriksen, 2001; May & Thrift, 2001; Thrift, 1988). As time progressed, liturgical time — the 'light of God' — gradually coincided with daylight, peasant work time. Furthermore, as bells were symbolically (and pragmatically) placed in village church towers, the centralised regulation of time was as much a device of public surveillance as it was a call to labour time. However, with the Enlightenment project and the advancement of Newtonian physics, time shed some of its religious connotations and came to signify an independent, quantifiable and observable unit of motion (Adam, 1990). This

though did not circumvent its link with labour time. Indeed, it is with 'industrial time' that the clock is most closely linked as its mechanised workings of homogenous and exchangeable time units became synonymous with the workings of capital time — labour as clock-time personified (Alliez, 1996: xvi).

To suggest, however, that the clock only exhibits linear time does not do it justice, for its continuously circling hands also show cyclical/symbolic time, the mark of the everyday intersecting with linear, accumulative time (Lefebvre, cited in Russell, 2002: 196). It is also possible to demonstrate that the twin concepts of *kairos* and *chronos* — propitious and ongoing time respectively — can impinge themselves on specific or generalised clock times. So too can the phenomena of synchrony and diachrony that account for the flow and punctuation of time bear upon clock time (see, for example, Brand, 1999; Crary, 1999).

Thus, it is especially in the modern 'now' that various conceptions of clock time may be simultaneously present. And if present time is perceived to dominate others, it does not mean that other temporalities are written out of Time. However, when temporalities exhibit differing speeds, an accelerating 'now' implies that at least one of them, if not more, is getting faster. How then may one apprehend time, and find amongst these quickening paces of modernity a place and time to figure in the 'slow'?

One way of 'doing' slow is to take advantage of the propitious, opportune time as a 'break' in continuous time flow. Many attempt to theorise what can be done in and with moments in time. Virilio suggests that "Giles Deleuze... progresses in snatches, whereas I handle breaks and absences" (Virilio & Lotringer, 1997: 45). Benjamin's (1970a (1936); see also, van Reijen, 2001: 33, 36) conception of 'aura', which he speaks of as having "a strange texture of time and space", is also particularly helpful. It appears to put faith back in the aesthetic experience that travels with time. Indeed, Virilio (in Armitage, 1999b: 39-40) himself has asserted that the sensations of gustation and taste (to which I would add smell) are the only realms of human activity that "have not been effectuated by the 'live' (speed of light) that transfers in an aesthetics of disappearance". These are the sensory hold outs in the face of disappearance in too-quick time.

The aura, furthermore, performs what van Reijen (2001:34) calls a 'paratactical' task, for as a 'false' semblance of pure contemplation and receptivity, it conditions its own decay to make room for the dialectical image. Similarly, where Benjamin alludes to the 'time out' modernity of dream-images, phantasmagorias and ur-phenomena, his interest is in the coming together of the then and now into a constellation that will make possible the legibility of the moment (Benjamin, in Santos, 2001: 181). This is the second way of 'doing' slow: to keep faith with some idea of a history. Benjamin's (1970b (1950): 249) famous reading of Paul Klee's 'Angelus Novus' holds that the angel's face is turned to the past, where he perceives a single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage at his feet. The angel would like to stay to 'awaken the dead', but a storm from Paradise – progress - is blowing so hard that he can no longer close his wings, and he is instead propelled into the future. This, I think, is also what Serres (1995) warns of when he points to the return of history in our moment of forgetting. This is not the history that I alluded to earlier, but the illusion of history that hugs too tightly to the notion that the future necessarily means progress. This is Nietzsche's eternal return where what is slow is not slow itself but the lack of progress. In other words, just as the speeding-up of modernity is not of one and the same speed, 'slow' is not merely a reaction to 'fast'. It is not so much an antithesis to fast time as it is a point of elaboration where different slow speeds journey through — different slow times — take off to move beyond the limitations and mistake of the 'first' slow.

5.3 Global, local SF time

Slow, in other words, is not about procrastination. What can be done to counter the alienation by speed, or the takeover by technologised, 'inhuman' time? How can these acts counter the time of 'now' that seems to dominate all other times? Some mention has been made of the ways one may disrupt continuous time or appeal to the aura especially by using the sense of taste and smell as they are less susceptible to possibilities of 'disappearance'. There are also calls to attend to the constellation of time in which historical moments may run alongside the present. The particular inflection of time within the SFM, it can be said, has specific aims. However, the

delivery of these aims is diverse: this is due in no small part to the different ways in which one conceptualises the idea of 'slow'. In conceiving slow as such, there are two lines of flight that express the intentions of slow food, the organisation, as well as the people who subscribe to the movement. Firstly, that SF encompasses a range of thinkings and doings which attests to its journeying through in slow time, but by no means does this imply that it believes in all slow times in advancing its aims. Secondly, that there is something 'untimely' about this idiosyncratic movement that "brushes history against the grain" (Benjamin, 1970b (1950): 248). This may be considered in keeping with the historical trajectories of social movements, though whether the SFM is actually one such entity is debatable. In both cases, there is a clear sense of the tactility and pleasure that it is trying to elucidate by precisely hinging itself on matters of time.

The global, local understanding of slow figures in food as such: If one considers that bread and wine often accompany an Italian meal, one could be struck by a number of things: the constant return of the hand to mediate between food and mouth; the pulling apart of a bread loaf and the manoeuvring of a piece of bread into a morsel; chewing bread that modulates the palate; sipping wine that punctuates conversation; the rhythm that is created by these interspersions; the unhurried conviviality. The tactile actions of engaging bread and wine with the body cannot be divorced from the shared corporeality that is a meal with family and friends, nor the feelings and emotions that might transpire during the course of it. That there are timings that modulate these actions and transform the "topography of that space" (Mol & Law, 1994) are often ignored. Alternatively, one may consider that bread and wine may be regarded as religiously symbolic of the body and blood of Christ (for discussion, see de Certeau, 1988). It is, however, also possible that it refers to their Catholic and catholic food identities. Of the latter, it can be argued that it is not just in an Italian meal that bread and wine are partaken, but indeed a number of other European cuisines. If one broadens bread to mean any sort of dough-like, pliable substance, and wine to mean anything with a measure of alcohol, the list of included cuisines grows even longer. In fact, simply referring to cuisines may be more appropriate here, as it would be facetious to assume homogeneity of cuisines within a culture

(whatever that means), much less a nation or its regions. As it would be the case that regardless of everyday eating or a special occasion, there is a likelihood that people are not eating of 'their' cuisine, perhaps consuming some so-called exotic 'other'. So while it may seem as if at certain times of the day the world dines together with bread and wine, closer inspection would suggest that even if that were true, the actual mealtime setting might be borne of a range of rather disparate and individualised actions, not to mention an intimacy with some other(s) that belies any simple generalisation.

What I also wish to demonstrate from the example above is that an act that is seemingly general can be made particular, and of course vice versa. In other words, there is something that could be considered slow food time, as it is practised in its various guises around the world, as there is SFM time, which may be specifically applied to the activities of the SFM. One should not conflate each with the other. At the same time, both these times need to be delineated separately as the integrity of each inspires the other. Slow food time is borne by the choices made regarding their overlaps: what are the slow times that the slow food movement chooses to call its own, and to what extent does their subsequent enunciation of such times serve to impact on the food landscape in view of making it *better*?

One of the more obvious initiatives is to ensure that every (slow) time has a place. On an organisational level, slow food functions as a grassroots movement, forming local chapters called convivia to which individual members are attached. The SLOW magazine which the members receive four times a year is jam-packed with writing on slow practices — eating rituals, farming lifestyles, traditional food techniques — that are happening all over the world, but in-situ. In disobedience to the so-called throwaway society that we appear to inhabit, the SFM takes quite seriously the idea that some things are here for the long haul — that the longer it takes for you to grow something, the longer you tend to it, the more likely you will become attached to the item in question and value it for its worth. In keeping with this idea, the SFM has, for example, a sub-terrain 'wine bank' at its newly opened University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo, Italy. Here wines that are deemed significant — perhaps by

vintage, grape type or region typicality — are stored. The SFM also maintains strong alliances with groups such as SAVE (Safeguard of Agricultural Varieties in Europe) and SOS (Save our Seeds) just to name two. Correspondingly, the notion of posterity looms large for the SFM, and the main means by which this is given voice is through education. These could range from localised, instructional events conducted within a convivia to one of the more formalised 'Master of Taste' workshops organised by the Italian headquarters and taking place around the various regions of Italy. The greater emphasis has been on children, ensuring their inclusion not only in convivia events, but also at occasions such as the bi-annual *Salone del Gusto* whereby tastes workshops for them are run alongside those for adults. Concerted efforts have also been made to include school and extra-curricular syllabus activities ranging from cooking classes to the well-publicised 'Edible Schoolyard' project in Berkeley. In this latter project, school lunches are created from the school's own sustainable, organic farm. Heralded as a success, it is now being replicated in many other schools in the US and beyond.

There are a couple of issues at hand here. One concerns terroir, as was mentioned in the previous chapter. While historically used to refer to typicality within a wine region, this terminology now refers more broadly to creating a particular *expression* of a place's wine and food produce. More recently, this notion entwines culture, livelihood and production methods of producers in that region with efforts to strengthen the link between food and people and add personality, so to speak, to the particular food entity. Where previously there might have been a post-World War Two ethic of efficiency in the fields accompanied by an industrial agriculture model that sharply clashed together time and nature, the SFM advocates attention to the precise terroir, and timing, of the locality.

There is also the issue of people and matter mobility which will be looked at in more detail further along this chapter. For present purposes, there is acknowledged a pronounced tenacity in maintaining the people, food and place connection, there is also a realisation that it is only through certain movements – be they physical, virtual, or indeed affective — that the promulgation of these ideas and practices can occur. For example, that educating schoolchildren in their school farms is matched by better

eating practices at home; that the 'Master of Taste' workshops are not just Italy-based but can be replicated in any number of suitable locales; that articles in the Slow magazine are published in different languages and distributed widely, including the internet; that knowledge of the SFM and its associated practices are passed on by word-of-mouth in a variety of formal and informal ways; that the pleasure in encountering 'slow' is experienced, remembered and kept alive in places to be, in times to come.

The 'slow' in the SFM is regarded as a process. Rather than quantified, precise checkpoints, it has to draw in a series of things past, present and future. A notion such as terroir is less about place fixities, and more about the fluidity of a certain locality. In industrial agriculture, much has been done to temper the fluctuations of nature. Agriculture as advocated by the SFM seeks to envelope precisely this dynamism. In addition to the received notion of seasonal regularity, there is a need to take into account an 'open' clock time for, in some sense, little in nature is consistently repetitious. The edges of seasons, for example, are frayed, eating into one another and recurring beyond their supposed domain; freak weather is not so infrequent; and even slaughter time in far-flung farms have to be worked according to the schedules of travelling butchers. In many farming communities, mechanistic notions of time have little significance. Land and people are so entwined that the linearity and circularity of time is played out through habit and tradition. Correspondingly, every season has food that is different to that produced the year before, every produce consumed this year is different to that ingested last year. This variation in the year's crop is shown to be the expression of the terroir which defies strictly demarcated time. Another important part of the movement is the Ark of Taste project, a scheme evoking Noah's ark and set up primarily to give support to struggling farmers for purpose of saving quality food production that is 'at risk' from the 'flood' of standardization. Success is measured by the docking of the ark. When the flood is over, it is time to come ashore. Such efforts are integral to the movement's survival both ideologically and financially. On the convivia front, slow timings and temporalities also have to be understood as fluid. For example, efforts are made to remind members that the (longer) time spent on an actual meal reflects

the breeding period of a Navajo-Churro sheep, and that the serving of white asparagus at a particular time reflects its brief seasonality.

The conjoined importance of place and time, I argue, gives rise to the SF *event*. I do not merely mean activities that are organised within the SFM and that take place at set time/place venues. Rather, I think, SF is more interested in the possibility of an *event*: in what happens at a moment in time. This moment does not have to be spectacular, nor fantastic, nor widely accepted; it may be the conjunctive time that is found when 'something clicks and feels right' as it is the practised everyday. Some possible examples are given as follows:

An issue that lies at the heart of an event is the way in which time matters when food matters. What I mean is this: that within the SFM, there is an adherence to food produce that, following Bergson (1988 (1896); see also Deleuze, 1988), is said to be "different in kind". For slow food, one of the things this refers to is the liveliness in food matter enacting out the terroir in which food is grown. Importantly, it is also refers to what it is not — food that *seems* different but which, in reality, is not. Take for instance potatoes. On the Ark of Taste project, for example, one may find the Cetica Red Potato from Italy which has traditionally been used for the region's gnocchi dishes, or the flavourful Green Mountain Potato that was introduced to Vermont, USA during the potato blight there. Even within more mainstream varieties there are those more suited to mash in the winter season (Pink Eye) as there are those which suit chips for summer months (Russet Burbank, perhaps). On the other hand, contrary to slow food, there are processed crisps. While it would seem as if there is an expansive choice of types (thinly sliced, ruffles, thickly sliced...), cooking methods (home-cooked, olive-oiled...) and flavours (barbeque spare ribs, salt and vinegar, sour cream and chives, tandoori chicken, tomato...), more often than not what these present are not considered *real* differences. What is of importance to SF is not the flavour that rests on a ubiquitous potato crisp but that whose terms of expression come from within potato. The potato chip holds us in a politics of distraction, but food which is expressive of itself holds us in a politics of attention to the past, present and future. It is not food that purports slowness whilst

being subjected to faster times along industrial production lines, but that in which the time expended on a slow food entity is duly acknowledged. It is not the produce we tweak and change to effect a difference only in *degree*, but that which journeys and changes with time which reminds us of the difference in *kind*.

The sort of food matter that the SFM is concerned with — that which is different in *kind* — is often talked about by the SF members themselves. SF events that are hosted at the convivia level are slow in more ways than one. Certainly a portion of it relates to the speed at which events take place. When conviviality around a dinner table is placed as the foremost concern, when interaction and conversation among members take precedence over the speed at which the food arrives, when the journey of creating food from produce is made as important as the point of final consumption, naturally the time spent at an event is extended. As waiting appetites are stretched, so too is increased our anticipation and desire to partake of the meal and, in these ways, our attention is perceivably more tightly focused on the SF moment at hand.

There is also the issue regarding entanglements of food and bodily memories. An event often evokes an instant — a place, a time, a personality — which may readily transform itself into an act of memory. Through the exposition of the food product, or the familiar/foreign sensations that are elicited, or food entity and sensation conjoining to make this particular moment significant, a body remembers. SF events provide the place and time in which objects call into motion 'slow' within the present consciousness of a person, or group of people. Food — via its slow mechanics — is made contemporaneous with the duration of present time by juxtaposing within consciousness a remembrance of time past, imposing a recall during present time of the journeying of food, and allowing in present time this compression of times to make this 'slow' present.

Attention to bodily memories may also lead one towards re-creating and reiterating them. This may proliferate in the habitual everyday and also makes for a certain habit of attitude towards food. It answers the call of the SFM to "Taste! Practice! Enhance! Try anew!", for it is in the differing engagements of the senses that one is able to break apart the homogeneity of taste and explore more readily the uneven

surface that is slow food time. In this way, there is also an awareness of how an event of intertwining food and bodies is almost beholden to that particular time, for there is an acceptance that while some part of this moment may be reproduced, other parts may never be. This is the ungraspable aesthetics whose spliced components could be good company, visually interesting food products, well-written journalistic articles or striking photographs, but it is never simply that. However, when performed well, all these combine to evoke a remembrance of the heightened moment-at-hand, allowing for a possible recall in the future, and in the event of its subsequent repetition, consciousness towards SF time that thickens the force of its trajectory, the force of its mobility, and the force of its effect.

For the SFM, there is a realized and articulated SF time that is working through our lived, experienced time; for both members and farmers, consumers and producers, there is a realization that there are possible times – slow timings – within and outside of their beings. It is not mechanistic or technologically-savvy time that they want to give adherence to, but one that is almost like a 'naturalised nature time'. There are also choices made regarding what might or might not be considered natural (intuitively or otherwise), and it is these decisions that are readily equated to the performance of slow time. There is a prioritising of living entities that SF members render themselves to that is simultaneously familiar and foreign, corporeal and incorporeal. And there is an entwining and co-producing of human and entities that act together to make edible and delicious slow food. In conceiving of others as living slowly, or conceiving that they have a frame of reference for advocating slow time too, we connect ourselves to others, and others to ourselves, in ways that are not simply exclusive or inclusive, but demand that the duration that sweeps us all into being/becoming is one slow time.

5.4 Reflexivity, and the conduct of time

Some ideas of slowness are intuitive, some ideas are nurtured and practised, and yet some may lie in the interstices of time conceived differently. The story of Soyoung and her cheeses is threaded through the remainder of the chapter as I elaborate, in turn, in some of these time conceptions.

Remember Soyoung whom I mentioned in the introduction? Before her cheeses there was a mission. A quest, a diversion, a yearning. A dream.

We speak about the time she came from Korea, never having tried cheese before. This was a mere 10 years ago. The first time she tried cheese- farmhouse cheeses - was in France. When she went to America, she remembers going to the supermarkets and thinking: this is cheese? It was not like anything she had remembered.

My contention here is this: one of the ways the movement has come about boils down to a notion of reflexivity - an ability to look back, reflect, observe and make connections. Here, Soyoung experiences such a moment. Despite not having eaten cheese before, her first impressions of some cheeses that she tries in France leaves a deep imprint on her palate, and she is taken back to those impressions when she visits a supermarket in America that provides a contrasting experience. The awareness towards the cheese that Soyoung displays speaks of a modernity that, despite our presence within, is amendable. One, for instance, is able to stake a claim on modernity's validity and retrospectively comment on its 'past'. With characteristic aplomb, Latour (2003:37; see also Lash & Urry, 1994: 35) asserts that second modernity is first modernity plus its externalities, where everything that has been externalised as irrelevant or impossible to calculate is back in with a vengeance. Latour is not interested, however, in speaking of this latter modernity, preferring instead the opportunity to comment on 're-modernising' processes. What he does acknowledge is that the idea of 'reflexive modernity' (Adam, 1998, 2003; Beck, 1990; Beck et al, 1994; Beck et al, 2003; Lash & Urry, 1994; Lash, 2003; Latour, 2003; Lichtblau, 1999) is one whose very currency lies in showing how reflexivity is the marked distinction between first and second modernity. More specifically, this is the notion that reflexivity is not born of a sudden consciousness of the world around us, or an increase of worldly mastery, but rather of a heightened awareness that such a mastery is impossible (Beck et al, 2003; Latour, 2003).

The conditions that might have brought about this awareness are many; and neither is this awareness necessarily unified. On the one hand, Giddens (in Lichtblau, 1999: 14) attributed this reflexivity to the changing nature of institutions, whereby there was increasingly recourse to genuine expert knowledge, and more attendance to the

intentionality (versus objectivity) of that knowledge (Lash, 2003: 14). More convincing is the argument that the 'boomerang quality' (Beck, 1990) of unintended consequences bounced back from the 'controls' of first modernity. 'First modernity' represented a world where it was realised that too-rigid, industrial time tripped over its own efficiency; this was a world where staid boundaries of nature and society broke their banks and demonstrated their allegiance to a logic not of structure but of flows (Castells, 1996); this was a world where flows, arising from linear and discontinuous time, were bound together by virtue of their intractability. This was — is — what Ulrich Beck (1990) calls the 'risk society' that we live in.

Certainly Soyoung demonstrated a taste awareness of cheese. But she also had a background that allowed for a measure of reflexivity. In Korea, she had grown tired of working as a molecular biologist. Perhaps biophysics might be the key? A PhD offer brought her out to California to study in an altogether different field: food engineering, and specifically, dairy science. In the laboratory, she would be have been taught to manage what Beck referred to as 'risk'. Science, however, was just one of the languages she was conversant in.

What, then, is our current "attitude of modernity" (Foucault, cited in Michon, 2002: 181)? Recent ecological and food-related crisis are symptomatic of the risks that, taken on our behalf, have appeared to go wrong. If ours is an attitude of modernity, however, our intertwined selves can only travel so far without linking up with the 'flows' in which we are implicated, and sharing in the burden of blame for risks taken that have gone awry. On a more optimistic note, reflexive modernity is an appealing paradox that lends greater assertion to humans whilst wiping clean the slate of their normative boundaries with nature. In a way, our understandings of time are propelled by this very entwinement with 'nature', a process which raises awareness to our finitude in time (Adam, 1990, 2003; Giddens in Lash & Urry, 1994: 230) as it also introduces hesitation into our futures. Our ontological being as a mark of the "extreme recession of the origin' therefore is one that makes out of historicity 'a ceaseless rending open which frees (this) origin in exactly that degree to which it recedes" (Foucault, cited in Michon, 2002: 168). We are, as it were, as free as we are entrenched in this temporalised modernity.

A reflexive modernity seems to open up a time in which we decide who we really are. By this I mean that what is brought into question is the distinction of the self from the social. Giddens' (1991: 5) 'reflective project of the self' succinctly expresses this agency to sustain a coherent yet continuously revised biographical narrative, and keeps in check Durkheim's proclamation that social conventions were practised prior to the individual's. Yet it is debatable if this 'self-producing' project is anything more than a reproduction of the same-self in time (see Lash & Urry, 1994: 41; Lichtblau, 1999). More appropriate perhaps is the 'social sensitivity' embodied in Elias' (1992; see also Tabboni, 2001) notion of a civilised temporal habitus which recognises that behaviour and feeling in time can be of both an individual and as part of a collective. One might consider, for example, memory. For while some social theorists (Benjamin, Halbwachs) prefer to reclaim collective memory, others (Bergson, Wittgenstein) concentrate more on the individual memory (for discussion, see Crary, 2000: 318; Santos, 2001). Both individual and collective memories, however, can be performed together. Similarly, an individual and a society can work together in a time-producing modernity.

The irony is that the more pronounced the separation of categories, the less they seem to matter. This is what Latour (2003) had already asserted. What has not yet been mentioned is how reflexivity is not the sum phenomena of its description but rather the very insinuation of these categories. It is the reflex action in all senses of the word. Firstly, it contrasts with the reflection that had marked the so-called first modernity which "subsume(s) the object under the subject of knowledge (and) presumes apodictic knowledge and certainty" (Lash in Beck et al, 2003: 21; Lash, 2003: 51). Second is its 'action' which moves away from the disinterested thoughtfulness of Descartes (and Kant) to engage the doing-in-practice, or the practices of 'doing'. It is not the ontology of flows and networks but their connections and enactments that bring them into being. Lastly, a reflex action is immediate – it is a quick response. And while there might be a freedom of choice and action, there is less a privilege of time. "We may wish to be reflective but we have neither the time nor the space to reflect" (Lash, 2003: 51). Reflexive modernity demands fast decisions, making us act more as quasi-subjects, or what Lash (2003, original emphasis) calls 'combinards'.

Perhaps it is precisely in light of this that human traits such as trust and intimacy (Beck, 1990; Beck et al, 1994; Lichtblau, 1999) gain relevancy in a 'less reasoning' society.

The assessment of reflexive modernity as a time too fast is, I would argue, slightly harsh. If modernity can accommodate different speeds, traces of reflectivity can be tagged on to the presently reflexive space and time. This very present modernity is one that heralds the necessity to take seriously the idea of responsible time, or what Brand (1999) calls "the long now". This represents a call for reflexivity to respond to wider timescales like evolutionary histories (Adam, 1990, 1998), as well as for "*tiny inflections*... to be considered against a background of practices of an entirely different nature — which only an anthropological enquiry can retrace" (Latour, 2003: 41, original emphases). For to go fast is also to forget fast. Discounting reflectivity entails missing out on the moments we afford attention, the times when we choose to 'suspend our perception' (Crary, 1999). Perception is slow, and cannot be thought of as immediacy and punctuality. Indeed, as Crary (1999: 10) further suggests, there are times when these suspensions are necessary, as when something is worthy of a "looking or listening so rapt that it is an exemption from ordinary conditions". Paying attention through a "disengagement from a broader field of attraction' thus allows the individual to attend to the 'resplendent possibilities, ambivalent limits, and failures" (2000: 1-2) of the modern experience.

Ideas of reflexivity and the modern experience must also be brought back into contact with the (industrial) clock-time to which it is inextricably tied. The clock, after all, is social time (Adam, 1990, 1998, 2003; Elias, 1992). It is integral and commonsensical to chart events in terms of dates and times as a way of accounting for reiterative daily habits. It can capture a moment of instantaneity as it can infinitely divide up this moment. Additionally, and in ways beyond its monetary value, clock-time is cheap as it is expensive. It is cheap because the purchase of time-power is much easier now than ever before: it does not matter as much to the completion of any one task in a twenty-four seven world. Simultaneously, however, it is expensive because of the potential ability of each modicum of time to 'do', to

perform, to fulfil. Southerton (2003), for example, examined the ways in which members of suburban households segmented their times to hot (busy) and cold (relaxed) spots. Oftentimes, they experienced 'harriedness' in their anxiety to 'squeeze' activities into a specific time spot. On the other hand, this strategising also provided them with the opportunity to enjoy cold spots, which they variously described as 'quality', 'potter', 'chill' and 'bonding' time. These 'cold' spots can also be thought about as 'slow' spots.

A scholarship from the California Dairy Research Institute was awarded to Soyoung to study the influence of fat globules on the properties of cheese. Was it enough to keep her in the programme? Studying small proteins was not the same as studying 'life'. She came home one day and told her then-boyfriend that she didn't want to be a scientist anymore. He replied: What's wrong with that? I knew it ten years ago. Just sit down and think and find a way to do what you really want to do.

Finding time to think. Calibrating priorities. All this seems to suggest that an allowance should be made for a normative 'slow' as a "conduct of time" (Alliez, 1996). That is, slow should be considered as valid a conduct of time as time is for slow. Such are the relative fast and slow speeds that crisscross varying degrees of attention that, in their differentiating slow times, they create "matrices of transformations" (Foucault, cited in Michon, 2002: 174). Put more simply, the complex intertwining of time can only seek to make more nuanced the textures of slow time. Furthermore, normative slow is more than a time born of reflexivity. Semblances of modern reflexivity, for example, often disremember to fold back the aesthetic 'feel' of society (for exceptions, see Lash & Urry, 1994: 54-59; Lichtblau, 1999). As such, they often omit a comprehensive account of the sensate 'aura' that goes into creating the pleasing aesthetics of slow time. Finally, because reflexive space concentrates mostly on a linearly-progressing society within modernity, it neglects to see that cultures of modernity are more often than not formed in chaotic time (Serres, 1995). In this, it fails to explicate not only the complexity, but also the creativity that goes into the making of a whole orchestra of slow time.

5.5 Time consciousness, and the importance of duration

Though Soyoung did not complete her studies, her knowledge of milk and cheese did not go wanting. She desired to use her scientific background to put ideology into praxis. She wanted to build up a production plant so that traditional farms could not only be self-sustaining but also be able to turn their milk — then selling at prices 'lower than that of water' — into value-added products, cheeses specifically. She wanted to help traditional family farms maintain their practices in a modern world. And she wanted to make cheese.

A desire to let slow 'in' is no less than a paradigm shift. It is not the tarrying of time or an arresting of fast but an awareness, and an occupying of a different time. To desire to do something differentially slowly because of an ideologically leaning, to put into practice the work that is needed for any transformation to take place requires, for this second conception of time, no less than an understanding of time consciousness and the importance of duration. If there is a desire to take to task slow time, it must also be recognised that the idea of 'slow' is not necessarily intuitive. What this means then is that it is not enough to know slow to be slow, for in that cognitive process one has to realise that one might also be in the midst of experiencing the acts of slowness. This realisation presents itself as a sort of knowledge that is accounted for by the cognitive, and the more-than-cognitive human, and one that is often associated with the logics of consciousness.

Consciousness, at first instance, can be considered an awareness that serves as a directional mechanism for the proceeding of human thought. Any intuition that is practised in the measurement of time appears as its extended knowledge, and one that also takes into account the continuous motion of time. Consciousness thus appears attentive to specific moments as it does to the "experience of successiveness" (see Krauss, in Crary 1999: 217). In thought, "(t)he mind expects, and attends and remembers, so that what it expects passes by way of what it attends to into what it remembers" (Augustine, 1997: 309). This flow of consciousness, in time, however, is not pure. It may be attenuated or enriched by the forces of perception, attention and memory, among others, affecting the flow of time. It is to such issues that I shall now turn.

It is often suggested that there is a linearity to time, one which is referred to by the terms past, present or future. These, though, are not pre-supposing states which follow on one from another, but rather enact each other into being. Beyond calls of constructivism, interrogating time recognises the ontology of time's categories as it does their entwinements. If this is so, what then is time's past? Recent analyses, following Henri Bergson, lend sway to there being a 'past-in-general' that is like a virtual recording surface, eternal for all time (Deleuze, 1988 (1966); Deleuze & Guattari, 1994; Dewsbury, 2002). Anchoring to this surface is the ontological or "immemorial memory" (Deleuze, 1988 (1966): 57) which reaffirms the preservation and conservation of the past. What ties this possible past to the present is then a situation whereby:

> "We become conscious of an act...by which we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first in the past in general, then in a certain region of the past – a work of adjustment, something like the focusing of a camera".
>
> (Bergson, 1988 (1896): 133-134)

Thus there are 'pasts' that can only be so when they are brought into being by the 'present'. The self that "leap(s) into being, into being-in-itself, into the being in itself of the past" (Deleuze, 1988: 57) at once lodges between an old present that it once was and a new present that it is now but that will surely come to pass; it holds itself in a concurrently referential and experiential moment.

I remember trying to get to Soyoung. Her name scribbled in deep pencilling by a prominent SF advocate I had spoken to earlier. "You must speak with her." I dialled. I dialled again. I left voice mail after voice mail. There was no answer.

I finally get her via Robert, a chocolate-maker I was interviewing. "She said she did not understand what you were saying. You were too soft. And she doesn't get your accent". It's strange to recount this conversation. For as I write this, Robert gave in to cancer some three weeks back.

The idea of memory, what is remembered, retold, and how it is then relayed is as important in the interview process as it is to Slow Food, members to one another regaling food events, memories, a picking of a tailored memory from a past in general. If drawing the past into the present is like focusing the camera, the recollection of memory is like adjusting its aperture. There is a sense that moderating the amount of light into a camera's lens is inextricably linked with the focusing

process, yet at the same time every readjustment brings about new light conditions, every picture taken can never be exactly identical to another. As Derrida (for discussion, see Santos, 2001) asserts, every memory that is recalled — 'in memory of' — can only ever be a repetition, and since every repetition takes place in a different moment in time, every memory that is called upon to infuse a present moment is 'new'.

This is not to say that memories are pure inventions, or indeed that they continually pour forth from the past to flood the present. There are degrees of voluntary and involuntary memories, as there are differing intensities in their individual or collective forms. The self, however, appears able to discern and dish out varying doses of attention to the moments in memory. This is in line with Bergson's (1988 (1896)) call for the self-preparative stance of adopting the right attitude. The mind readies itself to perceive the past; the body readies itself to receive this past. An attention to this past gifts the moment a zone of possibility. And so when the self meets this past, a composite memory is formed. Two sieve-like occurrences, furthermore, contribute to this composite effect. In some ways, these occurrences correspond to what Bergson (1988 (1896); also see Deleuze, 1988) terms contraction-Memory and recollection-Memory. To the former is ascribed a certain 'distance' of memory: how far back in history one goes to retrieve a memory from the 'past-in-general' as well as the ease with which it then travels with the likes of (and not limited to) perception, desire and anticipation to affect the present. The measure of effort involved relates indirectly to the possible present memory. To the latter is ascribed a certain 'habit' of memory. This concerns how practised the self is in retrieving a specific memory. Paradoxically, the better one is at recalling the memory, the more determined it will be, and hence the less possible will be the creation of a differently composite memory.

What was it about Soyoung's memory of the French cheeses that made her want to move from being a consumer to producer? How often in her studies, in her dealings with the milk and cheese did she recall those moments? What other desires did she possess? Soyoung tells me about her times as a politically active student in Korea,

with ideological leanings towards Socialism. Was her decision to design production plants and provide for small farms connected to her wish to counter market exploitations that might be wrought on the small-scale family farm? She certainly did allude to this, and the constellation of ability and ideology that propelled her. But why is the focus on the attention aspect of all this?

Attention is very closely tied to the present. Every call to attention was made, at one point in time, in a present moment, and in performing both the 'distance' and 'habit' of memory into being there is an almost innate question of autonomy. How free are we to choose the sorts of memories that are 'expanded' and 'recollected', and how free are we to choose our responses to them? The purpose of asking these questions is not to engage in a metaphysical debate regarding free will, but rather to attest to the very efficacy of the present. It is plausible that the aforementioned kinds of memory demonstrate that a degree of autonomy can be lacking in the present, but it is similarly conceivable that the present inhibits memory precisely because it can. More likely perhaps is a scenario whereby a balance is struck between these two extremes. Whatever the case, what finally marks a situation as a present one is the very act of bringing the 'now' into being. The act, moreover, is not a drawn-out process but one that addresses itself as a "slither of action offering us tangibility of the present as something instant" (Dewsbury, 2002: 152). The instant – appearing more virtual than actual – has been referred to by Bergson (1999 (1965): 41) as an "extremity of an interval", but inlaid in this definition is the notion that the instant remains an interval that possesses the quality of enabling the next instant. Of making the present happen.

If we were to return to an earlier comment about consciousness being a directional mechanism, an *a priori* condition would be the necessity of an act of setting it in motion. This points to the imperative of the present. The present is the setting for the intersection of consciousness and the world, a world that is always grounded in action (Crary, 1999; Dewsbury, 2002). How then can a slow consciousness be born of this present, consisting of endless instants seemingly hurried into action? One may consider the embracing of what Heller (1995) calls the "absolute present", a moment

which recognises the ebbing away on one side of the weight of tradition and on the other the uncertainty of the future. Time does not just flow forward or backward; time is time in itself. Sometimes, an "expanded awareness" of the moment is also sought, an awareness which may be heightened by practices of present-day contemplation and mysticism (for discussion, see Thrift, 2000). Insofar as the present is of action (as it is of consciousness), there is necessarily an engagement of the bodily self to partake of this action (as does the mind in consciousness), and thus with them practices such as those mentioned above. However, what appears to set these practices apart from mere presence of consciousness, so to speak, is that they take seriously "perception-in-movement" (McCrone, in Thrift, 2000: 41) — understandings of the self as inextricable from the performing of body and mind. Though emanating different sorts of cognition from this same-self, body and mind are nonetheless as closely intertwined as the past is to the present.

Similarly, the future has an integral role in time's consciousness. In some sense, it is conceived not as that which comes after the present, but rather is itself *becoming* time. Paradoxical as a virtual 'no time' on time's spectrum may seem, discussion of the future is integral because it is in fact the "driving force of that actualisation" (Dewsbury, 2002: 153). Time pulls the present into being, and in doing so, annihilates itself if only to ensure its posterity. The future is the driving force that endures the efficacy of time.

The wheels of cheese were turning in the states. They were turning even faster in California. Yet Soyoung chose her path: two hours up to Petaluma for her a singly-sourced Jersey milk, and then to a goat's milk cheese farm where she plied – piled – her trade simultaneously with another: Barbara, a radical (if she may be called that) whose goat farm sat on valuable Napa Valley (vineyard) land. On her own, committing between eighty-five and a hundred hours a week to cheese-making is delicate, dedicated hard work. Soyoung doesn't recall having a day off in the last three years. However, she also said to me: When you love something, you are always occupied, don't you think so?

While it is useful to think through concepts such as past, present and future, it is recognised also that it is the process of consciousness that enacts the past, present and future. This time is *la longue durée* – the long duration. This long duration that takes into account the passage of memories and appears to ally itself with a slow consciousness. It is furthermore capable of capturing not only the continuing and

entangling matters of time, but also the time lags and absences that 'fall' outside its domain. What I mean is this: In the first instance, the world is not made up of one and the same consciousness that is experienced by everyone. We have a consciousness – what Bergson (1965 (1999): 38) calls our inner duration – that is ours alone, but it is also one that mediates our understanding of a time that is passing outside us. In fact, we use our inner duration to make a measurement of this time. There are distinctions to be drawn leading up to this notion of duration. When two flows of time are "equally *one* and *two* for (one's) consciousness" (Bergson, 1965 (1999): 35, original emphasis), they are said to be contemporaneous. If these two particular flows are then apprehended in one and the same mental act – that is, within the same consciousness - these two instantaneous perceptions are deemed to be simultaneous. They are deemed simultaneous precisely because they:

> "Both (occupy) and depend upon the duration of a like third, our own; this duration is ours only when our consciousness is concerned with us alone, but it becomes equally theirs when our attention embraces the three flows in a single indivisible act".
>
> (Bergson, 1999 (1965): 36)

This single indivisible act is the ontology of duration, having the ability of "apportioning without dividing" (Bergson, in Deleuze, 1988 (1966): 80) attention towards time's pasts, presents and becomings. Duration then is the very experience of time consciousness as it simultaneously is the condition for this experience to take place. For, as Deleuze (1988 (1966): 37) points out, experience is always a composite of duration. And since every present moment is necessarily oriented to the past as it is to the future, duration is quintessentially a movement.

Soyoung's cheeses were not known to her alone. Simultaneous time was also occurring in gaining her cheese recognition. Her first restaurant account was with the internationally acclaimed restaurant French Laundry. She doesn't know how they heard of her or where they had tasted her cheeses. But she got a call to bring her cheeses for tasting. And they bought them all up. She asked about the price they were willing to pay. They said: Don't worry. Charge enough. And we will charge our customers and they will appreciate them for what they are.

The difficulty of capturing the essence of duration has led to various visual analogies being used. Chief among these is Deleuze's (1988 (1966): 60) inverted cone whose apex touches a plane representing the present. The points on the cone may be virtual

(compressed) or recalled (stretched) to the present, yet they are always contiguous to each other as past, present and future. The cone thus depicts time's line and time's consciousness. Examples that speak to the impossibility of showing duration's totality (for doing so would threaten the contemporaneous and simultaneous times that are accommodated on this non-transcending surface) are Veyne's kaleidoscope (see Michon, 2002: 170) and Adam's (1990) hologram. For what is duration if not the multiple consciousnesses that "infuse living duration into a time dried up as space" (Bergson, (1999 (1965): 42)? What is it if not "a *multiplicity* of successive states of consciousness and...a *unity* which binds them together" (Deleuze, 1989 (1966): 45)?

5.6 The limits of the subject, and the introduction of matter

Harold McGee, in his dedication page on the 20th anniversary reissue of his seminal book 'On Food and Cooking' writes, 'To Soyoung...', 'for sharing her understanding of cheese...helping me clarify both thought and expression, and above all for reminding me, when I had forgotten, what writing and life are all about'.

Duration, it may be argued, is all that and more. Yet the third conception of time necessarily accounts for that which is at the heart of the SFM: the food entities. Thus far, it has been established that duration wraps within itself the consciousness of one and another time, but there is also a sense that our consciousness as such is incomplete insofar as there is not a consideration of the 'matter', the things that occupy this duration. What is there beyond human consciousness? I am not suggesting that one should now prod into the Freudian unconsciousness, but rather, that there is a need to consider where this consciousness leaves off and matter comes in to place beyond doubt that things similarly exist and endure on this plane of duration. Duration has a time and space for both the human and the SF matter to count.

In the way human consciousness is time-bound, it is productive to think of being human as being of a particular time – as being present to itself at a particular moment. Rather than a consolidated human identity and consciousness that is unique to us, we cannot be self-identical precisely because we occupy a duration which captures movement, and not a time in which "discontinuous series of instants

(are) repeated identically" (Deleuze, 1989 (1966): 51). When conceived as such, this present being has the opportunity at each instant to act as a bridge between human consciousness and the things at hand. I say things at hand, even though it may be more accurate to say things at 'body' as it is this multifaceted site that readies itself through its "sensory-motricity" (Deleuze, 1989 (1966): 69); it is its preparative stance that mediates and becomes a body that, in duration, produces things.

Of course, to even speak of humans and things as separate is to invoke an artificial impasse — arguably the more interesting issue is how one recounts their enactment of each other. There is, however, a precedent to why duration is so strongly advocated, and by and large it relates to the way that space has historically been conceived. Take one of Zeno's paradoxes as an example:

Achilles challenges the tortoise to a race, confident that his quicker speed will ensure a win. Surprisingly, the tortoise agrees and asserts that on condition that it is given a head start, it will definitely bag the race. Achilles, intrigued by the tortoise's apparent boastfulness, especially given its plodding pace, asks for an explanation. Well, says the tortoise, let us assume I start a hundred feet ahead of you. Both you and I know that before long, you will have caught up to my original position, while I would have covered a much shorter distance in that span of time. But no matter when you decide to assess this time, at every point of my original position you reach, I would have, however minutely, advanced beyond that point. So, in fact, you will never catch up with me. Achilles, on hearing this logical exposition, is deflated and concedes the race.

Is this the case of the triumphant slow? In reality, we know that Achilles can win the race. But underscoring this is Bergson's (1999 (1965)) concern with the misunderstanding that arises when time is subsumed *as* space. Running alongside the ascendancy of science, time here is considered 'space' insofar as division of the single timeline into equal units is possible within a system of classical dynamics whose frame of reference allows for a definite starting and ending point. It is the seemingly exact measurement of time without any avowal of what time actually is. And this time which stretches from Aristotle to Einstein epitomises a sort of thinking

in which the adherence to quantifiable moments belie the moving, real time that is happening at every instant (see Durie, 1999). Viewing the race vicariously, Achilles falls prey to the tortoise and withdraws from participating in an event in which his presence and consciousness to the contemporaneous time within the race would have told him otherwise.

What is evident in Zeno's paradox is that by concentrating solely on instances, space writes out the time that sits within it. Space is presented as the more powerful, all-encompassing thing that 'matters'. However, according to Bergson (1999 (1965); see also Deleuze 1989 (1966): 31), space displays a difference in degree rather than a difference in kind. That is, space is symbolic and more likely to exhibit an illusion of difference – of being two sides of the same coin – than time, or more specifically duration, which brings into its fold the concerns and workings of both space and time. For is not the instant a mere mathematical point in space if duration does not couple it with the motion of time? Duration then appears to more comprehensively expose the consciousness to both the movement of another consciousness as well as another 'non-conscious' thing; by accounting simultaneously for time and space, it opens up possibilities in a "zone of indetermination" (Crary, 1999: 317) and allows for the transformative potential of the next moment.

Bergson's argument should not be mistaken as one that forgoes space for duration. In fact, there is much room – much space – for matter to lodge itself within this duration. One way it does so is by employing the very gap in consciousness that proliferates in constantly moving time. Crary (1999), for example, alludes to Helmholtz's experiment which showed that nerve transmission from the onset of a stimulus to the subject's experience of it travelled at ninety feet per second. What astonished people, however, were how slow it really was. This was, he argued:

> "a statistic that heightened a sense of a disjunction between perception and its object, as well as suggesting startling possibilities of intervening in that gap between stimulus and response and of redefining a subject in terms of a new experiential domain of "reaction time"".
>
> (Crary, 1999: 310)

There appears then to be a beyond human, 'reaction time' for things to endure between the gap of conscious perception and reaction as well as exist in contemporaneous motion with it. Furthermore, if such a gap is found within one's consciousness, what more the lacunae between the consciousness of different people, and those which space delineates when continuous time encounters the friction of distance? I think the important issue is this: there is a need to conceptualise ways in which human consciousness and corporeality work with matters of space that underline the renewed significance of duration. Some work has already been carried out under the auspices of examining a "timespace" (May & Thrift, 2001) or via a "timescape" (Adams, 1998; 2003), which promotes a perspective that "develops(s) an analogous receptiveness to temporal inter-dependencies and absences" (1998: 54). More generally, there have been calls for space to make more sensate the invisibility of time (Elias, 1992: 1), as there are suggestions that Castells' (1996) 'timeless time' may be attenuated if it were time-bounded in place. Indeed, if decontextualised real-time processes are considered not chronological but rather "chronoscopic" (Virilio in Adam, 2003:68), the notion that it is precisely matter that needs to ground time is a persuasive one.

It is also pertinent that one attends to the human dimension of duration configured as space. Gil (1998; see also Thrift, 2000: 39) for instance asserts that the mechanics of space is elucidated by bodies interacting not just with each other but also with things around them. This is possible because a body in motion continually draws things towards (and away from) itself and others. And because time is measured through the intermediary of motion, a body in action is always a body that acts in time. Bodies, moreover, are deemed to have a dual aspect, for "as muscular sensation, they are a part of the stream of our conscious life...as visual perception, they describe a trajectory; they claim a space" (Bergson, 1999 (1965): 35). A body then is one moving in accordance with things as it is one conscious of occupying a space in duration.

Of what status are things – matter – within duration? Similar to bodies, matter is another linchpin of time. It is, however, said to be of limited duration, for it "has no interior, no underneath,...hides nothing, contains nothing...possesses neither power

nor virtuality of any kind...is spread out as mere surface and...is no more than what it presents to us at any given moment" (Bergson in Deleuze, 1988 (1966): 41). But because it has the ability to endure from one moment to the next, it is already extensive in duration. Correspondingly, sit as it may at the limits of 'expanded' duration, there is always matter in duration, and duration in matter.

The inclusion of matter is vital: not only does it paint a more accurate picture of duration, it also presents a way of making sense of the different matters that constitute duration and are drawn into contact with us. If one reiterates that "duration is always the location and the environment for differences in kind" (Deleuze, 1988 (1966): 32), it begs the question of how matter will be able to bridge the divide to become more, as it were, a difference in 'kind'. An initial step then might be to expound on some meanings of matter.

matter: *n.*

- A **thing**, affair, concern; physical objects, vaguely characterised;
- That which has mass, occupies **space**;
- Material for **action**, or upon which to exercise a skill, faculty etc;
- **Sense**, substance (as distinct from nonsense);
- Substance used or acted upon in a physical operation; a substance undergoing a physical or chemical **process**

(Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2005; emphasis added).

One reason why the use of the word 'matter' is preferred to 'thing' in the following is the ability of the word 'matter' to allude to a process or the **processual** nature of something. This is particularly apt when dealing with food matter, for who can not attest to having seen a banana go from green to brown? Increasingly, the metamorphosis of food and its passage from land to stomach is being made more apparent, and in so doing the links between nature and humans are strengthened. These linkages, moreover, do not only refer to food production or its consumption and decomposition by bodies, but also take into account the evolution of experiences and memories when food and bodies enter into new relations. So, if one extends the

example of Lingis' (1988, see Thrift, 2000: 46) therapeutic walk with nature, a trend towards returning to the 'land' might include anything from exploring vineyards to foraging for mushrooms; if one considers food beyond the point of consumption, the process of cooking is as well-documented in food programmes, film and literature as is the search for the ingredients. It may not be an exaggeration to say that "(our) humanity begins with things" (Serres 1995: 166).

More explicitly, these examples show that the **spaces** of food are what make slow time possible. Food matter is of a time-space where time and space do not oppose each other. Slow food spatialises slow time; it creates an area space in which slow might occur and a distance space within which food might travel.

What draws people to Soyoung's cheeses at the Embarcadero Market in San Francisco where she sells her produce? A whiff; perhaps a trigger of memory. The first time she set up shop, she had fifty pieces of cheese and no signboard. But people smelt. And the cheeses were sold within two hours.

What Soyoung's customers smelt was no less than slow time compression in her cheese – the time it took to transport her milk to the cheese factories, the it takes to have each individual piece handmade and cared for, the time that she spends discussing cheese usages and conversing with customers are all contemporaneous times that contribute to the *matter* of her cheeses. At the same time, the cheese is also matter in action, a matter of liveliness that changes with time. Matter in other words cannot wholly encapsulate time as time also lives in matter. Soyoung tells me about tailoring the specific pieces of cheese she sells to her customers depending on when they plan to eat them. She also tells me about the constant conversations she has with chefs when her unsold cheeses have exceeded a specific purpose and expertise is needed on what they can now do with their maturing cheeses. What Soyoung's cheeses do – literally – is to spatalise slow time by enacting, explicating and emphasising temporal qualities. Time endures and lives in the spatiality of these food matters. The duration that is of Soyoung, the Embarcadero Market and her customers has within it what SF would profess to be time that is difference in kind.

The customers who buy her cheeses carry them home. In an article on 'Marking time with Nike', Celia Lury (1999) observes the imprint of the Nike brand – as a duration

and as a durability – in its three dimensional Cartesian space. She speaks of the perpendicularity of space as those who walk by wearing Nike socks disperse the brand in space as their bodies are also repositioned by these Nike logos. One may similarly think of how this happens with Soyoung's cheeses in what I have referred to as 'area' and 'distance' space. From the marked space of the Embarcadero Market, bodies move and journey with these cheeses and their sensuous qualities. They extend the spatial reach of the Market as these active (three-dimensional) bodies also carry with them the ascribed slow time embodied in the cheeses as well as in their decisions to buy these cheeses. The promulgation of cheese is simultaneously area and distance space; the same can be said of the customers who frequent the market, many of whom are SF members.

Ascribing agency to food matter clearly displays an intention to add (rather than reduce) the enabling matter to the slow food movement. More than a mere artefact of the movement, the dynamic processes of food matter contribute greatly to the liveliness of the movement. Finally, figuring food into the equation allows us to be something more than human subjects as, conjoined with food matter, we perform and give back to time what is precisely in its fold to capture. We can afford slow time because it is time which is afforded us.

This demonstrates that there should be due attention given to the reciprocity of time. It is particularly apt when one considers a closed, interacting food system rather than one where reliance on entropy and wastage out of a specified food arena allows for a supposed efficiency based on the measurable quantity produced per unit area and time. I say supposed for, as matter is 'intercovertible' with energy, a system that uses energies, such as inorganic fertilisers, that are found outside it is essentially an unsustainable one (Held 2001). In addition, if duration is the unity that binds individual times together, the interdependence of one time on another takes on renewed significance in a slow food system. This is because slow matter honours time-in-process and in large part, confers on time the reason for its quality and taste. There is hence a notion that the metabolic exchanges of matter which respect time and space produce a difference **sense** that cannot be totally captured by quantitative

measurements. There appears to be an ironic excess in the food of this 'closed' food system then, and one which for now we will refer to as its "sensate matter".

That one is able to sense matter is arguably an effect of the inherent slowness of matter. This follows a view propounded by Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 118) that unlike 'pure' philosophical thought, science accords to particle mass – matter – an opportunity for slowing down, as matter itself works to create a freeze-frame in which the actualisation of philosophical propositions is possible, and in which the referential (in duration) can exist. This is the 'touching base' quality of matter that can be similarly extended to include bodies, for both these entities demonstrate a certain inertia that sits stubbornly with time's momentum. This slowness, however, does not necessarily make matter mundane and banal, but rather provides a platform for reinventing the old as well as creating anew (Michael, 2003). In anticipation of what is to come, we hinge our bodies and thoughts to matter and in doing so, slow down. What this slowing down means goes beyond the reduction of speed, for it now lends to matter integrity in time and space.

It is also important to emphasise the ties between matter and its tangibility. By this I am referring to the 'face' of matter - the image - which "is more than what the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing*" (Bergson, 1988 (1896): 9; original emphasis). The term 'image-matter' shows image to sit astride both representation and thing, but to conflate matter with solely one or the other would be inaccurate. First of all then, the notion of image-matter is predicated on the idea that our perception of matter is *slow*. Rather than matter being always self-present to the world, there is a necessity of realising and directing attentiveness towards it ensures that "human perception, conditioned by physical and psychological temporalities and process, provide at most provisional, shifting approximations to its objects" (Crary, 1999: 4). Perception is what comes after we are conscious of a certain physicality in space and time. Since matter has "neither virtuality nor hidden power" (Deleuze, 1988 (1966): 41), we often assimilate, albeit belatedly, image-matter to it.

Within the duration time that we are all bound, image-matter is the very means of charting the traffic between humans and matter. In mediating the circuit of matter

perception to its actualisation, image-matter is the "motor ally" (Deleuze, 1988 (1966): 67) that contributes to movement in duration. More significantly, the reciprocal relationship that is borne through image-matter sets out to inject liveliness into our differing engagements with matter that extend beyond their '**thingness**'. What is recollection if it is not perceived via the image? What is memory if not image-matter? It is imperative at this juncture to note that image-matter takes the form not only of images, but of words and, more specifically, writing. This is not just to say that language matters. The interest here is in the materiality of inscriptions that travel with, or images for purpose of adding to, the image-matter. For though it is neither food nor its mere representation, the image-matter, taking the form of anything from newspaper articles to photography, can be shown to transmit in contracted or expanded form the links between 'life' that is food or human. This is an integral part in the development of matter that is different not only in degree but in kind: in some respect, this development works towards producing a measure of truth that will endure in duration.

Accounting for matter is not simply a component in telling the story of the SFM. Food is not merely symbolic or the 'thing' that one chooses to use to make sense of the world. Without narrating the vitality that is both human and food or depicting their utter reciprocity within duration, there simply cannot be a SFM. If slow food matter is to endure in duration, its very **action** will need to demonstrate an "attention to life" (Bergson, 1988 (1896); Crary, 1999) to ensure its own material posterity. If slow food matter is to fulfil itself as a difference in kind, it has to move away from presenting itself as a reproducible commodity and instead fill the time and space crevice with an 'ungraspable' life irreducible to its constituent qualities.

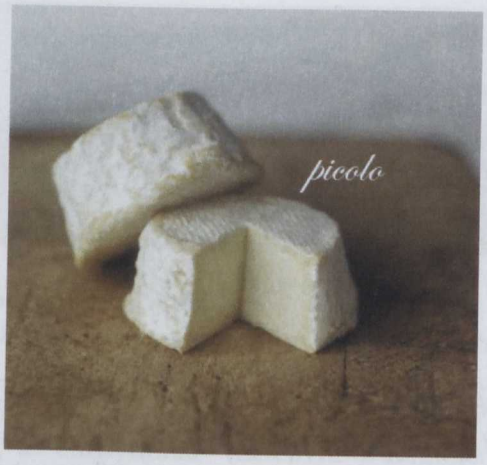

Fig 3: Picolo cheese, Soyoung Scanlan©

Many cheeses were born of the constellation of moments and events. Picolo, a triple-cream cheese, was born of a season. Specifically, a long winter that spring could not shake off. A friend had called and requested of Soyoung a cheese that could brighten her mood. Hence the Picolo, gentle, light and refreshing, with a melting consistency.

Fig 4: Nocturne: Blue and Silver — Chelsea 1871, London: Tate Gallery

Fig 5: Nocturne cheese, Soyoung Scanlan©

Also conceived in time – Nocturne, Soyoung's first cheese, forged in picturesque dusk. She remembers going to the Tate gallery and looking at James Whistler's Nocturnes Series, set along the Thames River just after sunset, and then being moved by the experience of walking out and seeing the exact same thing. Nocturne, a soft-ripened cheese, was to obtain that same grey colour by the addition of ash on the cheese. It took time, and a lot about 'the rhythm, the tone, and feeling'. But it got there. 'At first it was all black. And then the penicillin started growing. There was a bluish hint and it became grey, grey, grey and then silver. But there were hints because of the uneven surface. I patted – not really sprinkled – the ash on with my hands. And there was a pattern going. And I saw finally: yes, this is Nocturne; there is nothing more I can do'.

5.7 A rhythmic interlude

A pause...the division between past and present blurred; a beat, and suddenly is affirmed the liveliness of human and food matter. For what is time if not its own sensate rhythm, and duration if not its own symphonic display? It is apt to link this 'ungraspable' liveliness of life to the creation and beating of a slow food rhythm for, in effect, it is an analogy which draws out the tendency of both to attend more to process than eventual form, to be as attuned to repetitive beats as to creative moments.

While much attention is given to clock time, less has been said of that time which beats in living matter. I say beats, for one idea of rhythm is that it is a "regular repetition of a time period (the metre) that controls the unfolding of music" (Duffy, 2000: 54). The rhythm of duration then must be considered one that counts out the agricultural seasons (day-and-night, moon-cycles, yearly, generational) as it does our biological beings, circadian or otherwise. Borne of both human and non-human rhythms, these repetitive beats are also often cyclical. In their recurrence, there is a reminder of the bounded "engagement with the times of the body, nature and the cosmos" (Adam, 2003: 61), and a call to awareness of their "webs of relations,

including path-dependencies, evolutionary-principles and time-lagged effects" (Held, 2001: 361). In the specific realm of the human, for example, practices that are said to be chronotherapeutic follow these bodily tempos in the dispensing and effecting of medication.

Of course to speak as such not only caricatures the manifold rhythms that exist, but also belittles the adaptability of human and matter to perform to various rhythms. Rather, it is more accurate to consider individual and collective rhythms as enacting life's social amplitude, a "eurhythmia" (Lefebvre & Regulier, 1985 (2003): 67) that already presupposes the association of differing rhythms. However not all rhythms are equal. Often the distinction has been made between the natural and unnatural rhythms — between organic and, conversely, inorganic or mechanical rhythms. It is frequently perceived that while a commonsensical notion of a natural motion is conferred on organic rhythm, mechanical rhythm rules the 'metre' in an antagonistic fashion. One reason for this conflation relates back to an earlier mention of a commodity-time in which the empty, relentless beats of an industrial and alienated world contribute to their easy accumulation for capitalist, non-sociable purposes (see Lefebvre & Regulier, 1985 (2003); Lefebvre (2004); Russell, 2002). An unpredictable, organic rhythm, conversely, breathes when it is encountering the lively qualities of the world. That we contort and stretch, to varying willingness, in a choreography that insists on multi-faceted rhythms is probably a more accurate depiction of the actual performance of human and matter.

Pertinently, repetitious rhythm should not be construed in mainly negative terms, for if one considers Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) idea of a musical refrain, the 'return of' a certain rhythm or pattern works to build up a territorial assemblage which, in fact, then goes on to affect the subsequent milieus and rhythms. That is, there is creativity even in repetition, for every repeated act is a "matter of expression" (1988: 315) that can only work to provide rhythm for its territory. This means that not only can traditional agricultural practices, for instance, be regarded as fluid and dynamic, but also that reiterating this rhythm gives resilience to the field as it elides both 'old' and 'new' times.

Because every rhythm is a duration (Deleuze, 1988 (1966): 67), there lives in each rhythm a space that is simultaneously shared by other rhythms, and in which the presence of one does not deny another. But just as we are grasping the rhythm that is us as it is around us, it appears "subordinated to action towards the outside world, oriented to the external, to the Other and to the World, to the point where (it) elude(s) us" (Lefebvre & Regulier, 1985 (2003): 193). Despite this constant elusion, rhythm is not 'lost' because we can hear, feel and arguably, see rhythm. It appeals to us by resonating with our aesthetic and kinaesthetic sensibilities, proceeding as an overspill of human and matter that bears the trademark of a creative *haunting* not unlike oneiric imaginaries.

When a conscious effort is made to map out slow time such that weaker beats are as important as stronger ones; when natural rhythm can co-exist with regulated ones; and when the 'everydayness' (May & Thrift, 2001: 31) of the lived can be infused with unexpected moments is when the textured rhythm of slow time begins to extend itself into the realm of being understood and practised. As Lefebvre and Regulier (1985 (2003): 194) explain, "for there to be rhythm, the movement has to have strong and weak beats, which recur according to a rule or law — long and short beats, repeated in a recognizable way — pauses, silences, blanks, recommencements and intervals, all with regularity". In their assertion there lies an intriguing question that will be explored throughout the thesis: how does one reconcile the various components of rhythm to its rule in a way that does not detract from the melody? In other words, how does one aspire to create harmony between the pragmatics of the food landscape and its pleasing aesthetic without writing out the things that matter?

5.8 Democratic Slow Time?

The question that should now be asked is not whether there is a slow food time, but rather, how attending to such a time may make things *better*. Suffice to say that this is an issue that deserves greater elucidation than is possible at this juncture, but one can at least start to consider what a more democratic food landscape that incorporates a slow time might look like. In tandem with this too is advanced a keener eye on the subject of choice, for as in a previously stated example, what is at stake is not food

matter that is different in degree, but rather different in kind. This idea of choice, in particular, is not a free-standing or freewheeling one. It is not the total purchase of slow: one should be able to, as it were, sensibly 'pick and choose' what, when and where slowness is deemed appropriate. Rather, in keeping with the initiatives of the SFM, it is in thoughtful, measured doses of slow that are exhibited the precise *radical* time needed to enact changes onto the food landscape.

It is worth reiterating that the purpose is not to equalise speed. It is not to make fast appear slower, or make slow go faster. Rather, one takes as given the individual and collective arrhythmic nature that is life. Speed, in other words, is not symptomatic of democracy. The democracy of slow food therefore is postulated as one that respects this inequality of speed, and that in fact revels in and harnesses its precise inconsistencies.

To take the issue of democracy seriously necessitates its linkage to our sense of responsibility for unlike spatial matters, there is a general lack of governance of time. Pertinent to the field of agriculture, Adam (2003: 68) raises the problem of genotechnology having the "potential capacity to reduce to an instant what took generations to achieve with conventional breeding methods". What this mean is that with food crops such as genetically modified (GM) ones occupying an increasingly visible portion of the food landscape, there is a need not to fall back on Luddite-type reactions but rather safeguard, via various discursive and practical methods, against the erasure of differing food matter. Any inability to rectify a mistake made in the name of progress suggests that the successiveness of time so integral to our time duration and consciousness has already broken down. We will not be able to act upon what is to come because we cannot recall, remember and recreate what has past. There is a need then to stretch out an ethics of care by throwing open the spectrum of past, present and future of our consideration. There is a need to move beyond our selves to take in time and food entities that are 'beyond human consciousnesses'.

Further to this is proposed a commitment towards levelling out the dictate that consumers may have over the producers. It is not to overturn or subsume one group to another, but rather to ensure that the connections between them are co-productive

of their shared time. One way to do this is by thinking through how 'slow' may insinuate sociological categories such as work (labour) and play (leisure). These cannot be considered out-of-date concepts as in both praxis and popular discourse much is still being made of their relevance. What is fallacious however is the argument that our present world of time-space compressions makes for an indistinguishable intermesh of work and play. This is not so. For farmers, the demarcations are often very clear. For example, work is framed by regular timing the feed as it is called upon depending on the variability of weather and seasons. What have perhaps changed are the conditions in which food is consumed – the ease in which one may be able to choose to eat in/out, now/later, what/how is reasonably prevalent. What I am saying then is that there is an inequality about how time, including slow time, travels for different people.

To rectify this disparity, it is important to consider the 'pleasure of food' element that is so vital to the SFM. If time were considered a commodity, then perhaps what can be done – and indeed it is what the SFM implicitly does – is to distribute out via 'slow food' the contracted labour time of those who toil with those whose expanded leisure time it is to spend. It makes it seem natural that sometimes, food moves slowly, bringing together those who *have* to wait with those who *can* wait. It also increases social and monetary recognition to small food producers for whom especially the financial terms of exchange have generally been less favourable than the consumers they feed. In a sense, terms such as these which are wrought in mutual agreement are rather like fair trade schemes in that they extend any moral or ethical agenda beyond reasons of guilt. One does not seek to address the structural inequality directly as much as modulate this very imbalance via the axis of food that attends to the possible overspills of time. This time embraces: in overcoming its boundaries, it is also a way to make slow food even more extensively affordable.

There is then an attempt to extend all around a measure of democracy. Within the SFM, this stretches from the apparently mundane emphasis of having meals at the dining table to more ambitious projects such as the creation of 'Slow Cities'. To counter what it perceives to be a dominant industrial food landscape, the SFM

appears to ask: how far can one afford to extend the locus of non-dictate? In this is reiterated the importance of what it considers as truer matters of choice made with respect to time. It cedes to another food, thing, or person an acceptance of non-predictable time, whether it be in regards to the crops in the field, the conversations and relationships that may be forged when consumers meet producers directly, or indeed, when a burst of flavour surprises one's taste buds. In these circumstances, one may arguably be better able to choose what is grown, what is sustained, what is promoted, and what is eaten. Coupled with this sentiment however is a measure of the pragmatics, for idealism to a certain degree has to be matched by feasibility. With this in mind, the destination is viewed to be as important as the journey in the right direction. The promotion of the SFM in varying places does not fit a schematic time plan. Rather, it performs something that could be termed a 'stepped democracy'. This is democracy without the loud bangs of 'more choice' advertising as often asserted by food companies and businesses. Stepped democracy requires more coordination, time and realisation for any alternative 'other' to be drawn in; for reflexivity among people to coincide; for physical distances between producers and consumers to be covered; for unflinching taste habits premised on the body's desire for sugar/salt hits to change; for daily patterns of what we buy and whom we buy from to alter. More often than not, all these actions lack instantaneity, and distribute unevenly over time, over place. That it is carried out in the spirit of a concern to slow time and what it embodies is often the defining factor.

To allow for such democratic acts, there is a presupposition that there is a measure of freedom in which these acts may occur. Democracy is not directly equated with freedom, but in its association with promoting a more equal food landscape there are certainly some actions that can only be carried out under the banner of being 'free'. Attention, for example, should be paid to the idea that primarily, freedom is not of speed as we are considered to be moving at absolute speed already, but rather freedom of movement (Russell, 2002; Virilio & Lotringer, 1997). Hence, the way in which we proceed as normal or change direction is important in both physical and ideological terms. Also, it is in giving due recognition to the reciprocity between food matter and humans that ironically enlivens them both. It is then these lives that, after

all, provide freedom, and it is in these lives that, every now and again, untimely acts spring up as a testament to the "practices of liberty" (Michon, 2002: 182). Finally, freedom exists because the singularity of duration allows it so. The duration of time is freedom and it is in whether we choose to enact out this duration then determines our freedom. In fact, it is precisely in understanding this entwinement of duration and freedom that slow democracy can happen.

5.9 Conclusion

> Pupil F is slow because he has to look at everything that comes into view for a very long time. The image held by the eye remains in place to be thoroughly explored; succeeding images glide past unexamined. Pupil F sacrifices completeness for detail. For the latter the entire head is required, and it takes some time before there is room for the next unit. Therefore, a slow person cannot follow fast developments...but he can grasp unique appearances and slow developments better.
>
> (Nadolny, 2003 (1983): 177)

In a rather meandering way, we have come a full circle. The perplexities that were John's (Pupil F) are similar to that which appeared when we first encountered slow time. Along the journey, we saw how slow could or could not be explained as a sign of our times. We perceived and were attentive to it as an impetus to exploring the topography that is our time consciousness and our duration. We heard it beating to the regular and irregular rhythm that is life; we felt its pulses resounding within ourselves and within the Slow Food Movement. We tasted the food matter conjoined to us in time, and conceived what the steps necessary to make the food landscape, via the SFM, more democratic were.

Time allows us to perform slow/slowly/slowness, because duration itself is a monism that enwraps us within. Time allows us to engage in the food choices that are made, because to do so we draw upon the possible past, present and future that is its perspective. Time allows the possibility of a certain measure of freedom in which to make the decisions we do so that, in ways tangibly productive and sensibly practised, we can, like John, 'grasp...slow...better'.

Chapter 6: Ethics

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to demonstrate that ethics is an integral concern of the SFM. It follows a trajectory similar to the previous two chapters on time and commodity in that this deliberation on ethics excavates and succinctly draws out the philosophy of the movement. Ethics, therefore, joins time and commodity as one of the main tenets of SF. I would further suggest that ideas pertaining to time and commodity go towards elucidating the very notion of ethics propounded here; any slow food-oriented ethics invariably already takes into account time and commodity-related concerns. It is not surprising that these three thematic issues intertwine and inform each other.

Notwithstanding this, it is a worthwhile project to examine ethics on its own accord. The contention of this chapter then is two-fold: the first, resting on the aforesaid importance of ethics, is that the process of the formation of the SFM is, and continues to be, informed by principles and ideas that are construed to be ethical. I deliberately use the word 'construe' as the flexibility and openness of a SF ethic is crucial here. Rather than ground or determine the course of action, I argue that ethics here is constituted by a creative ambiguity towards what SF is, what it does, and what it is supposed to do. Inherent in this process is an on-going dialogue that teases out not the differing strands, but the *ethical substance*, or what Rabinow (1996: 16) calls a "reflective curiosity" within the movement. Secondly, members subscribe to a *sense of the ethical* in the SFM. Many of the remarks made (and some shown here) emerged in the course of conversation rather than as a concerted attempt to detail the ethics of their lives. It often seemed the case that participants were thinking and talking about ethics without being directly prompted to do so. In both these cases, the emphasis is on a quotidian ethics, especially one that places the ordinary, everyday and (sometimes) small *practices* of SF at the heart of its aims. This is distinct from fair trade, organic and alternative networks that express more explicitly their ethical

and/or political motivations. However, it is not necessarily contradictory as it aligns itself and is complementary to these other movements in that they all share a concern for expounding the sociality and connectedness of food. I will endeavour to show that the SFM's strength is in striking a balance, in a rather novel way, and performing its ethics as an "unspoken and often unrecognised force" (Pulido, 2003: 48) — it expresses most clearly the resurgence of ethics in the realm of food when it is practised exactly where it does not speak SF's name.

The chapter will proceed in three main sections. I open up the first section to firstly bring together what I have referred to as the 'ethical substance'. Concerns of SF members are brought to the fore via two field note narratives. They illustrate, among other things, worldly concerns of SF members as well as the importance of place which is keenly felt to be pertinent to the SFM. Indeed, issues that they hold close (such as those relating to the world, family, animals, farmers, diseases and politics) are constituted as *concerns* regarding their situated ethical sense in everyday lives, whereby proximal encounters highlight place differentials and necessitate choices by individuals which are formed within what Nussbaum (2006) terms 'spheres of experience'. Some comments will be made too on how the 'self' explicates and conducts itself in light of the ethical.

In the second section, I consider the pertinent differences between morals and ethics. This, I suggest, creates a necessity for an expanded ethical realm, especially one which takes a more inclusive approach to the life of a SF member. It is vital, I believe, to examine their embodied character and feelings, as well as the particular contexts which motivate them towards leading a slow-inspired existence. I propose revisiting Aristotle's virtues as a way of demonstrating that it is not duty or consequence that compels members to the movement, but a modern and more holistic understanding of 'human flourishing' and the 'good life' (*eudaimonia*) therein which perpetuates the movement's philosophy. Indeed, the question that becomes relevant here is one that asks: how does one live? Virtues that contribute to an ethos of a good life, I argue, do not oppose but rather run alongside the pleasures of food. The virtue traits that are

tied to this approach, those of honesty, trust, generosity, openness, temperance, practical wisdom and friendship are also discussed as being important to the SFM.

Finally, in the third section, the notion of an/other - beyond the self - is brought to the fore. On the premise that a community of people and things continually enacts ethics into being, I consider how a loosely Levinasian interpretation of 'the other' may contribute to a richer account of such an expanded ethical realm. I follow this by suggesting that it is not only the figure of Levinas' oft-mentioned face but the mode of speech, or more specifically, *talk* that induces this expansion. Here, talk is not a 'spoken' ethics but rather a locution device that enables a range of verbal/non-verbal utterances to be brought into the sense of the ethical. A case study work within the Napa Valley, California is used, focusing in on the Backus family who raise goats for cheese-making in the region. This case provides a way into analysing how the traditional attitudes of responsibility and care are reworked to speak more fully of the 'good life', providing the possibilities of advancing SF as a truly ethical movement.

6.2 Place/World Concerns

In conversations with SF members, one may surmise in first instance, a general sense of the ethical as it is related to place. Casey (1997) notes that there is an ontological connection between geographical place and ethics: the Greek *thea*, meaning habitats, is also the root word for ethics. For the interviewees, place here is understood in the everyday context. Often, as a lived experience of multiple locations and times, place presents itself as both the crux of ethical dilemma as well as its solution.

I begin with field notes excerpts from two such conversations: one is with Debra, a science schoolteacher in San Leandro, California, and the second with Krista, a freelance writer recently relocating back to Berkeley from New York City.

Debra starts by telling me about a teacher's summer camp that she attended that was supposed to extort the virtues of California's agriculture. Instead, she remembers it more as a nightmare. She was 'scared' the first time they opened the barn of the turkey farm and she was faced with 'ten thousand beady eyes starting at me, white turkeys with red eyes': she had never seen production turkeys before. As it was an overnight trip, she got talking to the farmer who told her the restrictions that a big producer had put on them regarding the size of

the turkeys as well as the compulsory dosing of antibiotics which he personally did not agree with. To make matters worse, she found out the next day via a pie chart presentation that most of the lettuce in the USA came from Mexico. This made her shudder because 'one of the first things people tell you not to eat is the lettuce in Mexico because it's been treated with heavy pesticides and human waste and stuff like that'. After, they toured a produce warehouse where she describes a 'banana gassing room' which shrink wrapped bananas in an effort to ripen them. This was vastly different to her experience of being on the Galapagos Island and eating a plantain of bananas that had just ripened. Drawing on her travel experiences, she mentioned how she felt SF was closely aligned to an 'European sensibility' and 'love the fact that Europeans and Africans are standing up to us', making cross references to a world food gathering that was just held in Sacramento. She was worried about her sister who was remodelling an expensive house but would not listen when she talked to her about the food she was feeding her kids. She alluded to being 'naturally skinny' mostly because 'if you understand food, you wouldn't eat 95% of the food out there' and then conceded that even though she felt like skipping teaching a two-page article in her textbook about the wonders of genetically-modified food, she would 'talk [with her students] about the two sides of it...there are always two sides'.

Krista grew up in Berkeley where 'growing up as a child wasn't that pleasant, food didn't feel nice like warm childhood memories' but remembers trips to her grandparents who despite living a simple, conservative lifestyle would always sit her down at the kitchen table and make a meal for her, providing a 'real sense of home'. In between writing jobs she has worked in restaurants and as a sale representative for the largest organic food cooperative in New England where she learnt about 'more environmentally sane things'. Later, moving on to Manhattan, she became aware of the absence of good, fresh produce sold at the markets near low-income housing projects. She became 'obsessed with this idea of creating urban gardens on their rooftops' to give residents access to healthy 'unadulterated' food but soon moved back to Berkeley where she observes how her divorced parents still feed their respective families 'complete junk food', such as microwaveable macaroni and cheese with 'five times than necessary packaging'. Though keen on joining in the local convivium activities which she says are 'compelling to me...the idea of community around the process of eating, enjoying each other's company as part of sustaining oneself', she is apprehensive and 'feels intimidated' because she considers herself a novice cook, and 'in my mind it's all going to be these people like Alice Waters, all these gourmands who know everything about food and I'm not going to be able to converse with them'.

These two accounts serve to give a flavour of the dialogues I had with SF members. In accord with other interviewees, an oft-mentioned sphere of concern was that regarding one's 'place in the world'. Here the individual mentions the world as an experiential entity that 'needs to be taken care of'; a place where there exists turkeys, bananas, farmers, families, students... a whole juggernaut of people and things that may possibly be affected as a result of one's actions. In this world there is concern for the banana that cannot ripen (Debra) as there is for the low-income family that does not have ready access to fresh produce (Krista). Here is presented the self-reflexivity to model oneself to consider 'more environmentally sane' solutions in the world, as

well as the life experiences that have guided these concerns. Engaging with one's place in the world is as much about a physical place as it is about one's professional standing (like Debra in her capacity as a teacher). Indeed, it is about being aware of the undetermined yet intertwined nature of the world.

Each personal stance and place in the world, furthermore, corresponds with a strong 'sense of place', manifested with positive and negative memories or associations (consider Krista's grandparents kitchen table, but also lettuce from Mexico City) from near and afar. Alison, a cheese-shop owner and also a member of SF, joined the organization because for her, SF 'encourages a sense of place'. Using the examples of Stilton Cheese and Olympia Oysters, she says that, indeed, 'the earth is one big place, but it is not the same place'. This sense of place is often spoken as one geared towards sustaining place-specific food productions, lifestyles or economies. It particularly adheres to notions of tradition and posterity, not just for plant and animal species, but also for the younger generation for whom the concern is in ensuring the future of a place/taste community. Across various spatial scales, cities, countries, regions, and watershed areas all figure prominently in this imagery and imagination of a sense of place. Place names, sometimes in relation to a specific time period, are furthermore used in metonymical fashion to refer to the food politics they embody. Debra's assertion that 'Europe and Africa (are) standing up to us' was often echoed, as was an especial reference to Berkeley, whose reputation as the hotbed of the 1960s student uprisings was often implicitly extended to account for its left-oriented food politics. This generalised sense of place has also been applied to Northern California, and even to explain the divide between the 'coast cities' and the 'red centre' of USA.

This concern for place differentials, however, not only affirms place uniqueness but also shows up place contrasts. In the case of both Debra and Krista, a doubling (at least) of places presented the discord they saw and felt. In mixing local and cosmopolitan views, many of the interviewees made comparisons between their travel and 'home' experiences to qualify emotions ranging from empathy to indignation. There are also vast differences between people in the same place —

Krista's experience of Berkeley, for example, was both as a place of childhood nondescript food memory and the socially and politically conscious food landscape of her adulthood. As well, place concerns and an ethics of the self are not seamless: a tension arises in Krista between the confident articulation of Berkeley and her own positioning within this place even though both possess a similar ethos regarding food. Finally, community and self concerns sometimes sit uneasily in the face of an embodied place, perhaps in the form of the mass-produced turkey in your backyard (Debra) or the better cook in the neighbourhood (Krista).

Inherent in members' concerns regarding place (or position) in the world and sense of place (or locale) is a quest for a mean to resolve what Friedberg (2004) refers to as "ethical complex", a conglomerate of historical and/or geographical circumstances that influence each member's ethical disposition. It is further suggested here that this mean is practised to counter any excess or lack in ethics. It is arrived at by way of *choice*. We have clearly seen the food-related preferences of Debra and Krista. For Robert, a chocolatier and another SF member, issues regarding position and locale draw together some debatable and conflicting observations. He sees, for instance, both exotic (Italian) and mundane (local) food vying for attention within SF. There is also observed a discord between the pursuit of fair trade versus the pursuit of taste; the pursuit of fair trade versus encouragement of local production; and an all-too-easy proselytising on local foods by those living in agriculturally-rich California versus the rest of the country or even less endowed regions in the world.

For other SF members, a plethora of similar decisions enter this ethical realm. These relate to the issue of unveiling the guise of 'real' food, such as supporting 'real ale' or naturally grass-fed beef, or by way of eschewing advertising gimmicks or excessive packaging. They relate to issues such as the treatment of livestock, over-fishing and the diseases associated with the improper handling of animals. They relate to care for local farmers, migrant workers in the restaurant trade, as well as local grocers and cooks who support the slow approach. And they relate to desires for the authentic - whether it is in expounding the importance of friends at the dinner table or the carrot grown at the school-garden project. Though these choices may span from the

sporadic to those that drastically alters one's lifestyle, all are borne of concerted efforts to consider a slow-oriented food ethic.

June, a jam-maker well known in the Bay area, tells me how her thought process in choosing 'unusual fruit' grown sustainably by small, local farmers couples with a methodology of simply 'accenting' their high quality and ensuring as little wastage as possible boils down to:

> "The bottom line that I have a child. [W]e leave land, air and water behind, but hopefully in a way that leaves the land use in better shape than I'm seeing in general food production".

This is action that is not merely spoken about as a one-off but rather geared more towards the everyday professional and non-professional lives of SF members. It is practised not only in their choice of jobs, but also in the people and things they encounter, and the issues they tackle. I raise here some snapshots of members who I spoke to who were so involved in what is arguably a slow approach in their everyday lives: Ann, for instance, was one of the founding members the Davis county food co-op and farmer's market which began twenty years ago and still helps out at what she says is one of the oldest and most successful in the country; Gail, who helped set up the first sustainable agriculture programme for the University of California Davis; Chefs Peter and Vito who champion farm-to-restaurant sourcing of food that is supplied to their restaurants; newspaper journalist Hsiao Ching who wrote an award-winning article about the socio-economic issues surrounding fishing rights for the indigenous Eeyak tribe; and Charles, an eatery owner who takes his liberty to plants herbs and vegetables on unused land he finds around Orcas Island. While this is a mere sampling of what members were involved in, it is fair to say that each and everyone had a willing conscience towards imposing a personal stance of concern for this world.

6.2.1 Self

Undoubtedly, world/place concerns are intertwined with concerns relating to the self. To think of the world already suggests a consideration of how the own self/subject,

as a comportment in this world, may be called upon to live an ethical life. What, however, constitutes an ethical self? Foucault's *rapport à soi* (ethics of self) takes a succinct route through the steps of how one constitutes oneself as a subject of one's own actions (Foucault, 1994; see also Rabinow, 1994; 1996). In the previous section, the idea of *choice* towards finding a mean in the ethical complex was flagged. For Foucault, four further choices can be discerned. The first is the choice of aspect (behaviour) as the part of the self that is concerned with moral conduct. The second relates to the choice of one's fit (mode) as part of a member of a group or community, and the maintenance therein of its traditions and customs. The third relates to a choice of effort (work) that one puts in to transform oneself into an ethical subject. And lastly, it is the aspiration (telos) that one strives towards in choosing to be an ethical subject.

The ethical self, conducting itself as Foucault suggests, is both a distillation and the epitome of any virtue it embodies. It is distilled in the sense that an overly conscious effort by the subject may suggest that the actions are not part of character. Without such dispositions, it would appear harder to sustain a personal desire to act as such and stymie happiness as a purpose of leading the good life. Yet it is also true that a personal volition towards this telos explicitly or implicitly factors in these considerations. The self – itself - is an 'ethical complex' (Friedberg, 2004). An apt example to show this complex, considering that a majority of my interviewees were from the USA, is one that discusses the country's eating practices in relation to the obese body. Themes such as bodily perversions (Grosz, 1995), disorders (Bell & Valentine, 1997) and images (Colls, 2006) have already been discussed in relation to obesity. More recently, an article by Guthman and DuPuis (2006) focused on the need to self-regulate a body suspended in a specifically neo-liberal climate. Guthman and DuPuis (2006) posit that the capitalist market, which provided the conditions for the citizen-consumer to overeat and become obese, was one and the same as that which demanded restraint (thinness) as a form of self-discipline that was looked upon favourably within this environment. I mention this because obesity was indeed an issue often touched upon in my conversation in members. I was often curious if issues of obesity influenced their decisions to join SF. However, it did not feature

foremost on their list of reasons why they were drawn to SF. As it will be later discussed, their conduct often ran a more congruous line with a desire to lead a more ethical life. Slow food was never mentioned as a way of self-regulating obesity. Rather it was discussed as an alternative approach — an adherence to a certain lifestyle, habit, and disposition — that would mean that obesity would not be a defining issue. In fact, as I am about to argue, it was clear that the ethical outlook that SF members most subscribed to could be understood by considering the virtue approach.

6.3 Some remarks on ethics: a virtue approach

> "I joke about it...but (SF is) really a combination of morality and hedonism!"
>
> (Nancy)

Nancy's description of SF is a commonly-heard one, where morality is set up in diametric opposition to its hedonistic ways. In many senses, this is not unlike the model that holds up the purported difference between morals and ethics. Often, a shorthand way of noting their distinction is in the juxtaposing of 'right' with 'good'. This assertion takes its cue from a seminal paper by Anscombe (1958). In it, she argued for the need for a new 'modern moral philosophy' which jettisoned moral obligation and moral duty —the moral *ought* founded in the certainty of right (and wrong). In essence, this was a call against the utilitarian and deontological moral theories prevalent at the time. The deontological principle (Kant) laid claim to a 'right' that, arising from the time of the enlightenment, was framed as an obligation towards a divine lawgiver (Anscombe, 1958; Crisp, 1996; Smith 1998). Likewise, while the utilitarian principle (Mills) was concerned with maximising the greatest 'good', this was a measurement not in and of itself but rather of a consequentialist nature. That is, actions that were carried out to fulfil this principle were still judged according to a teleological-driven 'right'. Both theories were particularly suited to a period of rapidly expanding modernity in which the ills regarding the rise of the individuated self were perceived to need curtailing - in this case, via the law and its rigid moral codes. Anscombe disagreed with the fashioning of the moral terrain as such. She urged the consideration of a more flexible idea of an ethical 'good' that

could accommodate contextual differences as well as the autonomy of individuals. In other words, she questioned the preponderance of a purely legalistic conception of ethics in favour of one whose teleological aim was a broadly conceived 'good' of human life. Such an ethic needed to analyse issues such as action and intention to accommodate a greater personal volition to do good. It also had to consider feelings such as desire and pleasure a necessary portion of the flourishing of a human life.

Following on from Anscombe's ideas, a SF ethic attempts to enact a rapprochement of this life. There is a need to transcend the moral theories of Kant and Mills to demonstrate that ethics is lived precisely as a balancing act between morality and hedonism. In this sense, it is not a battle between right and wrong; it is more akin to tipping the scales between good and better. It is an ethic that demands thinking, as Yeatman (2004) suggests, distinguishing it from a rule or duty-based morality. For thinking is reflective, curious, and engaging. It does not counterpoise but rather, enacts. What this also means is that 'right' and 'good' may be related, but they are not concomitant. It does not escape ironic notice, for example, that the laws formed in the spirit of impartial justice may well be the very ones that fail an individual when ethics is conceived more broadly. Using a food example, one of the things this means is that universal rules (agreeing to a fair exchange of food products for a certain currency amount, for instance) do not imply equity (equal distribution of food). In this case, an ethics of justice that is formed on the principle of equity may be opposed to Justice, and as such act as a measure of attenuating the full effect of universalising ideas and applications. Another thing this means is that for SF, there should be no illusion that its ethical stance sits squarely on a moral right. Its primary aim is not to fight starvation but to use a balance of morality and hedonism creatively to bring about changes in the landscape of food. In this sense, it is saying that there is not one measure of good as there is not one of evil. Cloke's (2002) idea of an 'ordinary evil' versus 'malevolent evil' is particularly useful here as it simultaneously opens up ethics as a more inclusive space while demanding critical consideration of what this openness means. As he later states, there can be "trespass (that) constitutes thoughtlessness rather than wickedness" (598). It is fair to say that it

is more in this domain of so-called 'thoughtlessness' that SF deems itself to be operating, and effecting for an ethical change.

Correspondingly, the thoughtfulness that the SF members may embody may be illustrated as such; in this case, relating to the issue of 'biodiversity' which, in earlier discussions on the Ark and Presidium projects, has already been mentioned as a central concern of SF. For example, when I was interviewing Silva, one of the researchers for the yearly SF Awards at the headquarters, she was at pains to emphasise that the award was not simply a one-off monetary reward for biodiversity (pers. comm. 2003). She spoke, for example, about the need for humility in asking for information from the award nominees she hitherto knew nothing about, and respect in tending to their narratives. Citing an example of a Turkish farmer whose award money not only allowed him to keep producing apricots but also enabled him the infrastructure to supply electricity and water to his house (see Community of Monte Ararat Apricot Growers, Igdir, 2004), she observed that the award was only a first step to an active relationship — not only between this man and SF, but also between him and his immediate community. Silva believed that it was only when one considered the continuing process of communication between and improvement of the land and its people could the idea of biodiversity be fully explicated.

Later on, in conversations with members, I often mentioned biodiversity in an attempt to elicit some opinions. Naively expecting to hear most members simply agree to support the idea of biodiversity, I was surprised by the variety of responses. Many spoke of it in terms of loss of animal or plant species. Sometimes this was framed as disappearances, akin to losing 'languages...and ways of life' (Nancy), and as such validating the protection of endangered species and heirloom plant varieties. Others however spoke more forcefully of preventing 'killing off these species' (Debra). For Debra and many others, the issue of our — human — interventions loomed large. Sinclair, for instance, felt that biodiversity was innate, but only because 'in the way people have lived, in the history of man [sic] as long as food is available...there are attempts at biodiversity, people always had [done so]!'. He felt it was a 'fancy word', but one necessary to spell out what should be a taken-for-granted approach to 'sustained environments'. Robert, on the other hand, discussed

biodiversity as something that was always 'disturbed'. Biodiversity was 'not like preserving the rainforest, it's a different issue'. Rather, it was about minimising this disturbance, which he felt was what SF encouraged people to do. Finally, Susan thought the notion was inextricably intertwined with 'economic diversity' as a necessary measure across different incomes strata, as did Seth when he commented on SF's support of 'commercial diversity', though he felt that it was an entirely different to biodiversity as a concept.[4]

It is evident that thoughtfulness is present here. My contention, then, is that this thoughtfulness can be regarded as a virtue, and one in a classification of virtues that articulates very clearly the ethical aims of SF. The reasons I make this claim may be traced back to some of the tenets in Aristotle's exposition of the virtues, especially those found in Nicomachean Ethics. Firstly, the teleological point of ethics here is 'an Idea of good' (1925 (1980): 127). Despite the variations in understandings of biodiversity, it seemed to me that members' opinions were formed under the impression that the pursuit of biodiversity was a *good thing*. For Aristotle, this good is *eudaimonia,* a word that defies direct translation but whose approximation is a good life that is lived to its fullest. It is informed by a quest to cultivate the quality of happiness which is the 'characteristic function of man' (ibid: 134), for happiness is the final and self-sufficient good that embodies the ideal of excellence (O'Neill, 1996). Feelings and emotions (such as happiness) are important to the motivation towards *eudaimonia,* and hence ethical expressions, but on their own they are not virtues themselves (Gardiner, 2005). A similar reasoning goes towards showing that a single act of virtue is not virtue itself, for 'virtue...is acquired by repetition of the corresponding acts (Aristotle, 1925 (1980): 134). Together, they go towards supporting the claim that an attainment of excellence has to flow from character: a virtuous character, no less. Virtue hence is an attribute of an individual. Yet it is also 'of man' in such a way that:

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[4] Seth went to great length to separate commercial diversity from biodiversity, pointing out that issues such as genetically modified foods had a complex relationship with both ideas. He also drew on Darwinian evolution to suggest that biodiversity was by nature, 'anti-biodiverse'.

"The flourishing to which virtue is tied... may be either that of the virtuous subject herself, or that of some patient who is a recipient of her virtuous behaviour, or that of some larger affected group – (one's) community, perhaps, or all humanity, or even sentient life in general"

(Garcia, 1999: 960)

A range of concerns may be attached to the notion such as that of the aforementioned biodiversity. Whether it is ensuring that sentient life does not disappear, that heirloom varieties contribute to both the environment and posterity, or that the market is a more inclusive economic space, there is a demonstration of the virtues of those who are seen to support practices that aid its cause, as well as those who will benefit from the display of such virtues. With such a wide scope to effect the issue of biodiversity, there are, unsurprisingly, strong elements of non-comparability, normativity and namelessness regarding these virtues. These virtues are non-comparable because *context* differences mean that any solely universal comparison of virtues disregards specific traditions and cultural practices. There is room, in other words, for members to express a range of virtues that support biodiversity without harking back to issues of morality or a hierarchical listing of these virtues. However, such an approach also guards against navel-gazing and myopic localism in the sense that its normativity builds on the idea that virtues are learnt, sustained and given meaning in a *community* (Blum, 1996). Thus it may be the case that an issue like biodiversity brings different communities – be they lay or scientific – together in an attempt to understand how different practices work towards this idea of good. These 'virtuous' stances are nameless because it is often imprecise deeds and acts that contribute towards what one may consider as virtuous.

Overall, while these acts cannot be prescribed exactly, they settle on a *mean* which avoids excess and defect. This suggests, among other things, that one does not try to dabble in everything at once. For example, when Ann, a SF member and prominent advocate of local food policies and issues was asked if SF should try to influence policies regarding biodiversity, she advocated that SF should 'stick to (its) knitting, and do what (it) does best'. To enact what SF 'does best' necessitates members carrying out the actual acts of virtues: one cannot merely pontificate on what needs to be done but must do it. It is hence with this understanding that Nussbaum (1993)

uses the term 'spheres of experience' to indicate acts that roughly fall under the gambit of those virtue terms. Pursuing the good of biodiversity the SF way is not only about balancing morality and hedonism, ecological asceticism and virtuous pleasure, but also about putting into practice acts that are driven by virtue thoughtfulness.

While I have tried to show how Aristotle's expositions on the virtues may be inflected in discussions of biodiversity, it is clearly the modern interpretations of virtues and ethics that pull Aristotle's philosophical concepts more tightly together. This has mainly been carried out by holding the relationship of virtues and ethics to be causal. That is, they interrogate the repercussions of virtues on ethics (and vice versa) on issues that Aristotle had discussed in a more conceptual manner. Employing this approach, a few notable insights come to fore. Firstly, the role of an individual as an agent directing the causes of action is critical. The individual is not an extraneous force but one whose character trait disposes her/him to do what is personally identified and required such that the effect is best not only for her/him, but others too. In what I have referred to as an expanded ethical realm, it is an individual in a community (in this case a SF community) which motivates virtuous and ethical action. Secondly, the emotions and feelings that figure large in *eudaimonia* are integral to concepts of ethics and virtues precisely because they do not split value and motivation in a self-effacing or even 'schizophrenic' (Stocker, 1996) manner. It is increasingly being recognised, for instance, that emotions like happiness that occur when doing/being good have more ethical substance because (repeated) ethical acts derive from the character of the persons involved. Thirdly, this means that practices are not a means to an end. The exercise of virtue is hence not a preparatory exercise but a necessary and central part of life (Rabinow, 1996). MacIntyre, for instance, states that:

> "A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods"
>
> (1981: 191)

These goods which are 'internal to practice' are important in the context of SF, and are contrasted with 'external goods' which are more conventionally thought as objects of competition which have winners and losers. Internal goods are also the outcome of a competition geared towards excellence, but only inasmuch as this achievement coheres the individual, the community that he/she belongs to, and, without exclusion to all who participate in the practice. I will elaborate on this point further on in the chapter with regards to the practices of cooking, eating and talking. Suffice to say that they relate not only to specific skills and achievements but may also be internal to relationships such as friendships and parenting (see Rabinow, 1996; Sayer, 2003). Finally, apprehension in pining names to virtues may be considered a virtue itself. In this context, undecidability is not the same as indecision. Rather it allows for virtues to be grounded with other moral and non-moral reasonings, with an openness and plurality that suggests new ways of connecting virtues as ethical outcomes, and ethics as virtues.

The discussion thus far recalls a classic but nonetheless important question lying at the heart of the SFM, namely: How *should* one live? Concomitantly, an expression of this ethics is also inherent in the question: How *does* one live? This separation of thinking from doing may be deemed superfluous especially if one does live, to an extent, the way one considers one should live. On the other hand, there may indeed be a disparity between what one thinks one should do, and what one actually does on a day-to-day basis. The latter case should not be viewed as hypocrisy. Rather it points towards the creative tension of life. Both these questions, furthermore, imply a quest for the 'knowing how...' that is at first necessitated by the 'knowing that...' (Stocker, 1996). They signal an earnestness to put to work an intention such that it might be translated into action. Yet on a more basic level, such questions refer to an everyday ethic of tactility and intuition rather than knowledge. A further question is in play: How might a good life for all be granted by the SF community? Perhaps one can take heed in some part of the advice that Ann gives:

"I think (SF) is a complete resonance, that's why it's caught on around the world. I've been going to Europe for many years...I love the way people live with food there. It's very hard to replicate here. But I think SF is a sign that people are hungry for that here as well. The

lifestyle around a meal, restoring food to the central role of lives that brings us together culturally and socially, understanding where your food comes from...people's interest in food not being considered so oddball. I think it's created a good economy for artisan production...books about food...cooking classes. There are a lot of ways that people can harness the interest economically and healthily, and that creates sustainability".

6.3.1 Slow Food Virtues

Robert's ponderings on the dilemmas and contradictions that SF sometimes throws up - such as that between supporting fair trade or local produce - are part of a larger, ongoing conversation that he has been having with other members in his convivium. While the conversation spans many topics and touches on diverse food issues, one of the most striking things, it seems to me, is that his efforts to redefine the movement's aims and goals demonstrate a refreshing dose of honesty. Indeed, his willingness to be upfront about the possibilities and limitations of SF was a trait that I had come to notice was pervasive among the interviewees I spoke with. More importantly, this honesty and upfront attitude appeared to be valued by SF members and those in the larger organisation alike. Often, there was a lack of pretence as to what SF can or cannot do, and a level of scrutiny to balance the realistic with the idealistic practices of the movement. Many spoke of the need for honesty in forging relations between farmers and consumers. These relations might effect what feed is used and which pastures are given for grazing, the medicine and boost shots otherwise given to chickens, which pest controls are used for grapes, and the drop-off locations for honeybees. In lieu of official organic accreditation or prior knowledge of why some things were carried out the way they were, reported conversations in this vein were considered integral to the continuing formation of SF ideas and practices. For one, it demonstrated clearly to the other party both the possibilities and limitations depending on personnel and/or financial resources. The reward of this honesty, furthermore, is that it often marks the beginning of trust. Whereas honesty draws its greatest tract from acts past and present, trust extends more strongly into the time that is to come. From neoliberal competition all the way to communitarian ideals, trust has been considered a working imperative (Gambetta, 2000). It is an imperative, furthermore, not as a unifying entity but precisely because it can be enacted differently in various situations. Mara, a farmer who is also a convivium co-leader

and Ark Committee member, explains to me how the issue of organic labelling becomes important only if localised knowledge or access to a particular food produce is lacking. Across the board, trust extends from the onus that members place on the organisation regarding their selection of Presidia products all the way to any one conversation that speaks in the name of a slow approach.

To trust is also to signal the presence of another trait that is very evident amongst members, namely generosity. The generosity that I speak of here is the giving not just in monetary terms, but also of the self in effort, time and spirit. With the exception of the employees at the Bra headquarters and a few select national offices, SF members form the backbone of those who contribute on a more voluntary basis. They give of their time to set up events, source hard-to-find local products, promote SF's cause and projects to the press, and write articles for newspapers or magazines. Manifesting as enthusiasm, empathy, concern and pleasure, they partake viscerally in issues surrounding how, where, by whom, and for whom food is produced. They engage family, friends and strangers into their agendas. But generosity is not only in giving tirelessly but also in receiving goodwill graciously. It requires a measure of openness. It is about being receptive to new voices, new ways of doing things and dispensing with stereotypes. It is as much about being open to a variety of choices as it is about factoring in the choice of others. Together, generosity and openness, as is the case with trust, are somewhat partial and clumsy attributes based not on any foregone conclusion of their reciprocal natures but an ability to be flexible in light of possibilities that lie ahead. They are clumsy because generosity and openness subsume experience and habit to any present or unheralded act. Though these attributes, together with flexibility, sound like flimsy qualities, they are in fact their greatest strength. For if virtues pertain to the way one lives, then flexibility ensures that virtues can be continuously performed within a life that imparts one with different circumstances, different choices to be carried out, and opportunities to vary them as deemed fit.

Temperance is a balance of virtues as it is the virtue of balance. It is applied here to mediate the character of individual honesty, trust, generosity and openness with the

community-oriented virtues of practical wisdom, friendship and prudence that will be discussed later. It takes seriously the contention that only a balanced exposition of the self and community will ensure the integrity of the SFM as an international, grassroots organisation. In that sense, it challenges the overly deterministic Foucauldian notion that "individual dispositions to choose are not the expressions of natural dispositions, but are worked up, governed and regulated by an array of actors who make possible certain forms of individualised conduct" (see Barnett et al, 2005: 29). Rather, temperance within the organisation is mutually beneficial as a worthy foil for highlighting or contrasting members' ethical stances while allowing such stances to shape the movement. On a more basic level, temperance as moderation is strongly linked to the movement's attention to scale. Not unlike Schumacher's seminal work Small is Beautiful (1973), members often positively aligned 'small scale' with ideas of sufficiency, 'just right amounts' of food, localised resource consumption, and the attention and care that such nuanced and close management can provide. In a time when information regarding food is as endless as it is multi-faceted, many members choose to employ a moderate, 'middle of the road' sensibility when dealing with such issues.

Knowing how to exercise temperance is associated with the virtue of 'practical wisdom'. In Aristotelian terminology, practical wisdom is not pure knowledge but rather that knowing entrenched in the decisions and circumstances that govern daily life: "truth in the service of action" (Arnaud & LeBon, 2000: 6). In other words, practical wisdom is planned and carried out in a dynamic and responsive world precisely because it is considered necessary to the fulfilment of a good life. Indeed, the varied projects and decisions that are carried out by members are not as arbitrary as they might first appear. If the movement's main aim is to provide stewardship for the food landscape and the protection of taste therein, from education projects for the disadvantaged to dinners for the well-heeled, then it arguably directly employs this virtue of practical wisdom. The practice of this virtue cannot be discrete for it takes place in an environment – a community – whose affect goes beyond the self. To know how to effect the goals of SF within different contexts, as SF International has largely been able to do, is to have utilised practical wisdom within what MacIntyre

(1984: 221) has called a 'tradition': a place not of stable reason but rather one "always partially constituted by an argument about the goods the pursuit of which gives to that tradition its particular point and purpose".

The last set of virtues that underlie the SFM relates to the making and maintenance of friendship. They are born of a desire to make connections, linking individuals to each other and to traditions notwithstanding prior relations. For even in the context of prior relations the attraction to connect is usually substantiated by additional circumstances: being in the right place at the right time, common ideology, or activities that permeate daily work and leisure lives. These virtues usually inspire delight in company, an enjoyment that nonetheless carries with it a measure of prudence. For such encounters to be reiterative, they cannot fully exhaust the resources that originally bring them together. In the quest for such friendships, members strive to enact the virtues that gear the 'good' towards 'excellence' in life. Utility, Pleasure and Good: Aristotle's delineation in ascending 'quality' of friendships continues to find much resonance in the lives of SF members, one with another.

6.4 Other

"I've noticed that when you have food that has very great flavour, and you're with other people, that it kinda increases the quality of human interaction. If these two peaches are two of the all-time great, and we share the peaches, then it becomes a high point of our lives, that kinda imprints indelibly. Interactions, it has that in it."

(Jon)

"In a quest to change the world, in her own way, she has. Flying back from San Diego, Alice Waters had a flat of strawberries, at a time when strawberries tasted like Styrofoam, and white in the middle. Hers were red and intense to the core, and the smell of strawberries started floating through the plane, and one by one people were coming and asking for her strawberries. And Alice was just giving the strawberries away – and she said: if you give people a great strawberry, they'll understand how wonderful it is. We gotta bring this flavour back to America"

(American Masters: Alice Waters and her Delicious Revolution, 2003).

What is an ethics of the other? In the chapter on the slow commodity, it was suggested that such an ethics concerns food that is true to itself. Arguably, it follows that such an entity can only be formed when, at various junctures on its journey from

field to table, an ethical relation with an other occurs. A beautiful and good-tasting peach or strawberry is nothing by itself if it does not form a relationship with something else. Jon speaks of a perfect peach that produces a bond of commonality and opens up a conversation - an interaction - which hitherto was not present; Alice finds that the scent of her strawberries gravitates strangers on a plane towards her. In this way, it may be found a community of people and things bound together imbued with, and able to effect, virtues. The generosity of Alice and her strawberries, the openness of sharing a peach are demonstrably a community that, following Nancy (1991), figures as a place situated 'being-with' as well as an affinity in 'being-in-common-with'. If the circumstances leading to the sharing of a peach are more intentional than a whiff of strawberries on board a flight, they speak pertinently to notions of community; communities that must at once be conceived as an "originary sociality" (ibid: 28) as they are ephemeral, "inoperative" and always in the process of formation.

This however is not to suggest that community is a reified or singular (albeit dynamic) entity. Any 'being with' suggests the presence of a dichotomised self/other, in the way that an 'originary sociality' suggests that one is always already interacting with another in a communal setting. Levinas (1969) pushes the question of origins one step further. In positing an ethical stance he deems as 'first philosophy', he considers our subjectivity as nothing other than a pre-ontological relation to alterity (see also Levinas and Kearney, 1986; Popke, 2003: 303). Using the metaphor of a face — and one that extends beyond the physically proximate — he exposes this relation as the severe form of an/other towards which a compelling reply must be made. In the face of another is a demand to be seen, and importantly, heard. The encounter thus is a singular experience which foregrounds the "performative temporality of the Saying" (Barnett, 2005: 9) as an unconditional, pre-meditated response that cannot be contextualised and contained. In other words, ethics cannot be but one of an intersubjective experience.

And yet it should not be forgotten that things — peaches, strawberries, planes — mediate these encounters. Such a consideration forces the rethinking of

(inter)subjectivity to encompass a broader relational ethics. Whatmore (1997, 2003), for example, talks about 'dissecting the autonomous self' as a way of breaking down essentialist notions of self and other, human and non-human, to call to attention nature/culture 'hybrids'. It requires, at first instance, a shattering of any staid notions regarding *our* relationship with land and food. It also runs parallel to two other theorisations worth highlighting here: the first being the way that subjectivity itself is not seen as a self 'deep within us', but as a space that moves and interacts such that "subjectivity is not a given but rather a process and a production" (Probyn, 2003: 294). Second is the theorisation that hybridity is necessarily borne out of connection, interaction (Massey, 2004) and resubjectivation (Gibson-Graham, 2002) processes which in effect produce a reorganised ethics of difference and alterity. In this sense, thinking with hybrids enacts a range of otherwise unseen socio-material practices. Food, for example, often considered foreign or 'other' to the body, is rather considered part of the self.

A rethinking as such not only allows for an increased scope and definition for the other, it also takes into account the everyday, ordinary ethics that suffuses and *is* the other. Both individual and collective/social spaces are the site of ethics. They are, indeed, what I have referred to as the expanded ethical realm. They have "a high degree of overlap...diversity of strategies and issues adopted and...variability of scales (which can be) understood as a set of practices which mobilise a diverse range of motivations, incentives, and desires" (Barnett et al., 2005: 27). This is not to suggest that every act or relation is ethical – it is not blindly open and inclusive. Rather it follows the ethos of generosity by allowing an/other that may be expressed, presented or represented differently. It gives weight to the relations that pull connections together, the face which compels us to act. And it accepts varying degrees of discreteness in self/other conceptualisations. The next section on the mode of talk will aim to show how — notwithstanding the lack of direct vocalisation — such relations may be teased out by some other/s.

6.4.1 Talk as mode of relation

In this section I suggest that a pertinent way that members bring 'the other', both the animate and inanimate, into their lives is via the mode of *talk*. This was evident in the richness of content, explication and self-identification that were expressed during the interviews as well as built into the stories and narratives that were told to me. I consider here four insights into talk that are pertinent to the discussion here. The first method of doing so is by way of what Philo (1991: 27) has referred to as "common moral talk". Secondly, I consider 'discourse' as a method of explication and focus on the issue of politics within SF. In the third instance I follow Boltanski (1999) in asserting that speech as a form of talk is performative and can promote action. Finally I use the term 'dialogue' as an encompassing mode of talk which intertwines with the practices of cooking and eating.

"I notice that if you tell the story well, people are going to taste better. And it's not so much because of the story, but I think...the more you understand, the more you get out of what you're tasting. "

(Jon)

In 'common moral talk', a story or a narrative piece is used as an exposition of why an individual or a group chooses to undertake certain action. Sometimes, in the course of conversation with SF members, I played devil's advocate and raised environmental, social and economic concerns which I asserted were possibly 'not as bad as they seem'. Among other things, I found this often teased out members' stances regarding why, for example, local butchers were 'good', supermarkets were 'bad', and how decisions were justified and/or dictated by what was 'right' or 'wrong'. This was opinion formed by interacting with others, including the media, and even when they were linguistically couched in moral absolutes, their ideas tended towards the descriptive and exploratory such that they were open to feedback.

Indeed, these issues often initiated a to-and-fro discussion or explication on why some common moral talk could, as it were, be so 'common'. One of the themes arose around politics as an arena to shape, confirm or extend one's ethical stance inasmuch

as one's ethical stance on food was increasingly defining the politics of the Left and Right.

> "For me, in the grocery store, it's almost like a political decision that I'm making. Everything is so loaded!"
>
> (Sandy)

> "Food is becoming a political left tool...I think fast food is a more right wing concept, it's still a global capitalist idea but...it may mean more than that at a higher level, as it would be defined not in the traditional sense of left and right...SF would still be *the* defining element in what is right or left wing".
>
> (Sinclair)

SF as a measure of food politics, in this case, was aligned with 'traditional' left and right-wing parties as they were the making of such politics themselves. This was raised not as a definitive tool but rather grounds on which one could do a number of things. Firstly, debate whether such affinity was strong, and what the relevance was; secondly, gain insight through discursive action as to whether or not one's view could be held up to scrutiny; thirdly, be included as well as include others in a group membership that was closely associated with the self. SF as an international movement affirmed individual actions and allowed people to join an organisation that was in line with their professed practices and beliefs. For Valerie, her SF membership made her feel less like 'some weirdo out there striking it out (sic) on their own'. Or another member, Susan, who felt that the SFM struck the right balance between providing ethical, political clout as well as allowing for 'self determination'. More than ever, it was recognised that there was little slippage between formal Politics and a politics of food that was formed in relation to a SF approach. For Sandy, 'everything is so loaded' because there is no drawn out plan to what is 'right' and 'wrong'. Or to put this more positively, because politics is 'complex', SF presents an opportunity for members to discursively fill the ethical void created by 'distrust' or 'disenchantment' with Politics.

For many members, consideration for an/other inspires change that transforms a politics of talk into one of action. On a basic level, members join SF and congregate to discuss issues because they feel that the organisation will act to advance their causes. This is possible because SF as an organisation allows for the treatment of the

collective to be undertaken as a dealing with an individual: it is considered a "collective person with its own will... or a will delegated to a representative speaking its name" (Boltanski, 1999: 15). 'Size', as it were, is reduced and concentrated on a face portraying this other. This face however does not hold a singular expression. Portraying this effectively requires a certain amount of creativity and imagination – perhaps by way of a documentary film like the American Masters programme of Alice Waters. In the film she speaks so eloquently of her vision for a changed food landscape that *we* share it with her. This sharing is also granted by a series of visually enticing close-ups — her tending to a fruit, talking with farmers or addressing an audience sympathetic to her causes. Hers is a case where a strong and clear group ethos is promoted and being spoken for, even as it is simultaneously evident that there is a singular, charismatic subject involved. The type of person best charged with enforcing this change from talk to action, furthermore, is what Boltanski (1999: 4) calls a 'split spectator' — one who is both an impartial/ordinary spectator and an ideal/Foucauldian one who is a spectator of oneself and one's conduct. This split character, he goes on to assert, is borne firstly of a desire for approval in one's community, and secondly of a desire for personal concord by adopting a point of view of oneself or one's sentiment as if it were that of an impartial person. In this character is observed two main impetus of performative speech that may call one to action: first, the denouncing any wrongdoing within the context of a community such that a witness holds talk to action to ensure that the accuser bases her/his accusation in reality. Second, the self-disclosure of one's humane sentiment of 'tender-heartedness' such that this "exteriorisation of the interior" (ibid: 82) results in one 'moving' everything that 'moves' her/him, propelling the protagonist into urgent, just action. As Lynn-Eve, a SF co-leader said to me:

> "I think – what am I really doing to change the way people eat? I think I do that just by talking about SF, especially when I'm at a restaurant and always grilling the wait staff where their chicken comes from. They are like 'why are you so intent on that'. Well...I really want others to know my food."

Performative speech then is context-specific. It can be realised in the public sphere such as a restaurant when displays of indignation or empathy are perceived as an "expressive conception of a relationship between intention and action" (ibid: 186). This is because any fleetingness in uttering an intention may be abrogated by the memory of those in whose presence it is spoken, serving as a reminder for the speaker to justify the reality of her/his intentions and the *consistency of actions* over time. It is hence a case where a singular event hinges very strongly on action as part of personal disposition to act as such.

It is inevitable however that any single-minded stance on SF can be taken too far such that it may end up smacking of rigidity or an overly strict interpretation of its ideas. The tongue-in-cheek, none-too-serious way in which SF members generally conduct themselves suggests there is leeway and openness even in the 'enforcement' of performative action. I employ the term 'dialogue' to encompass both verbal and non-verbal modes of communication. This term brings together, in no certain or cumulative way, the modes of common moral talk, discourse and performative speech. Dialogue is, firstly, a less intentional but more incisive form of talk, a locution device more open to randomness, divergence, banter and off-the-cuff speech than a necessarily coherent exposition on, for instance, the SF approach to food. It is, however, also more incisive precisely because the occurrence of feedback from another is of an undecided nature. Secondly, the trajectory of dialogue presents an element of surprise, which possibly makes an event more memorable. Taking, for example, Alice's case, the strawberry metaphorically 'speaks' through its scent and its subsequent taste – but reactions to this are not pre-determined. Thirdly and following, animate and inanimate entities can initiate dialogue: perhaps there is a witness to this beginning, and a communication of dialogic intention. Who is its audience? A documentary is filmed, released in a public sphere via television broadcast and special events like the SF screening I went to in Napa Valley. A question and answer session may ensue, or the programme may be spoken about over the dining table. So, fourthly, dialogue is a relationship.

Dialogues obviously are not only restricted to the public sphere. They are also entrenched in domestic contexts. If they are to be an integral part of what Probyn (1999) calls an ethics of existence, they must be present in the multifarious places where connections (and disconnections) with food are continually being forged. The arenas where cooking and eating take place, hence, cannot be understated. More than just hubs of activity, they have to be considered not in their silences but in their liveliness and verbosity:

> "I educate myself all the time, and part of the way I do that is putting dinner parties together. I tell people: come a little early, let's cook together. And so when they first come with their appetites, I frequently write out a menu, and give them a selection of appetizers but it does not include, for example, red wine. And they'll say: I just want a glass of red wine. And I'll say: No, we're going to have a course of wines and drinks over the evening, and the red wine will come about in the middle. Let's have some new sensations, let's have some thinking about what we're drinking and eating...Because if you've never experienced it, you don't know how good it is".
>
> (Ann)

> "It's just the two of us now, but before when our daughter was going to school, you'll work hard and then come home to prepare the meal together. That's the talking and sharing time".
>
> (Marlene)

> "In the winter we'll get together with another couple, and we'll make lasagne and cannelloni, but we'll make an enormous amount...like fifty servings...it's a lot of fun because it's very labour-intensive but it's also very sociable. It's also fun because many of these people don't know how to do quantity cooking. So they'll say "Well, what do you have two gallons of milk for?" and we'll say "Because we have ten pounds of cheese"...so it's very shocking but at the end of the day, you can just see...the pleasure they get out of seeing the foods of their labour".
>
> (David)

As dialogue enacts these socio-material practices and the sometimes unexpected trajectories they take, the sharing of food comes alive with conversation as the hands ladle the food, the lips sip wine in between articulating thoughts, and ears all the time are attuned to this orchestra of sound. Dialogue engages the vagaries of talk with the multi-sensual, enabling a synergistic opportunity to act for the other even when there may be a perceived deficiency in one or more of the elements. Nancy, for example, cooks for her household. She enthusiastically recounts the places they have visited and the foods that they have eaten, foods that she frequently recreates at home. In passing, she mentions that she suffers from anosmia caused by a virus some

years back, and hence is incapable of smelling. When I express amazement, she explained that while she could not create the tastes exactly — 'it's sometimes a hit and miss thing!' — she would remember the ingredients spoken about, and supplement that knowledge with a combination of recipes she may 'shop' for on the internet. Talk and things intersect to substitute for the nose, without too much hindrance to creating a dialogue over the evening meal.

6.4.2 Napa Valley and the Backus family

Dialogue continually creates community. Just prior to my arrival in Napa Valley, a SF event had taken place. Various members who participated in this event spoke to me about it. Peter, a recently arrived chef for a locally-based gourmet food store, related the story of his first SF event where he was called to 'work' by Chris, the convivium leader:

> "It was for Marshall Farms Honey. So we went to meet them, really cool all kinds of clandestine honey-making, fifty to sixty kinds, drop (the bees) when they see different plants like pumpkin blossoms, blackberries... I did every course and paired it with a different honey, and after cooking each course went out (to the dining area) to talk about it. And they all had the same philosophy and views that I had, so since then I've tried to go to every SF event. Everyone there I've made connections with."
>
> (Peter)

When I spoke to Chris, he enthusiastically recounted the event too. While a winemaker himself, he felt that the industry overshadowed a lot of other work that was going on in the valley. Because of that, he thought it was important that members got to know and support local producers such that they could 'put a name on the face'. The recent event for him achieved three aims. Firstly, that Peter as a new chef in the area got to try honey that he had never tasted before and was able to make a local food connection. Secondly, that thirty food lovers were introduced to this new chef and got to see what kind of food he could put together. Thirdly, that the honey-makers were put in connection with what Chris considered 'one of the most prestigious food stores in the United States'. Peter has since then bought the honeys for the store, and uses them in his cooking as well.

At the Napa Valley dinner too was a couple – the Backus' - who were well-known in the valley. This was abstracted from my field notes taken on my visit to their farm:

In the heart of the wine region is a terroir that caters to and produces something a little different. This 'other' that sits amongst vineyards are some *La Manchas*, folded-ear goats that graze on a 64-acre property of 'rock, dirt, roadside and chaparral' owned by Barbara and Rex. They produce milk that, as the law requires, is pasteurised, using an on-site 1940s machine that is better suited to their scale of production. This has produced some consternation with Barbara who disagrees with the amount of water and energy that this process demands which produces 'no beneficial outcome'. Cheese-making is carried out when the milk produced far exceeded personal consumption, driven by Barbara's idea that 'there is no way on god's earth that I can extract this milk from this animal, this gift, and throw it on the ground'. She accepts that milking is unnatural but insofar as she does so, she speaks about 'being there for the goats which are very sensitive and place-based', and about the need for direct physical and mental contact with the animals, twice a day, during the milking process. The 'production' shuts down for a couple of months in winter for machinery and 'internal, spiritual' repair, which coincides with the latter part of the five-month gestation period of goats. Unequivocally she ranks the priorities of her farm as firstly hers, her husband's and her part-time employee Karen's health; the health of the goats secondly; and finally, the cheeses themselves. She has a sole export distributor, whose business she asserts is small like her own.

Evidence of care for both the self and other is rampant here. On land unsuited to vineyards is a thriving goat population, which Barbara speaks of as being 'family'. She tells me how even those who no longer provide milk earn a bell and are kept as 'retirees' as 'we don't kill old animals just because they are no longer useful to us, it just doesn't make sense'. She speaks too of her continual quest in 'breeding a better specimen...because you should better what you are doing and leave better than what you got in the first place'. She takes care of the cheese, from ensuring the animals are not stressed during the milking process all the way to what she later describes to me as her management of butterfat and bacteria for optimum cheese-making. She takes care of her distributor too, directing all customers inquiries through him, and knows well her local customers. And she cares for the environment, choosing to raise goats as they were most appropriate for the existing land, but also having contemporary considerations for a range of socio-material and nature entities that exist prior to naming them as such. All these things are inextricably linked and gesture towards a *cared for* other.

6.4.3 Attitudes of responsibility and care

I focus here not on the complex ontologies of responsibility and care, but to consider more broadly how it is the embodied attitudes of members that clearly articulate the impetus to act for the other. This, I suggest, is more in keeping with the argument that subscribes not to the greatest good (what is the *best* care?) nor to the moral rectitude of a single decision (milking goats is irresponsible and *wrong*) but rather to the modes of responsibility and care employed in the realm of everyday (ethical) living over a period of time. It is not that acts by themselves are not important. They are, and indeed it is their iteration that enacts this ethical living, but I wish to attend here to the virtuous dispositions that shape responses and bring about such acts.

The reason responsibility and care are chosen as the two main factors is that a good, ethical life appears balanced by impetuses that both draw another towards the self (responsibility), as well as pull one away from the same self to the other (care). These movements may well be initiated by Levinas' ontological face of the other, but they relate in forms varying from the television images that are brought into the living room, to words that are encountered in travel, to lively, tangible foods that sit on the dining table. They are not unlike David Harvey's (1996) breakfast items which, subject to being uncovered, expose the linkages and connections that lead the items from farm to table. The 'work' or efforts that goes into uncovering their qualities are tremendous. Whether they are in the service of freshness, local proximities, or mediation towards improving quality, they are conceived of as products of care and responsibility. SF's attention to the food entities as well as those engaged with its journey along the way is a testament that caring for another takes place. Though a mother buying her child a pair of shoes may arguably exhibit a quality of care similar to her cooking the meal for that same child, it is different in the opportunities presented daily to renew/create connections, and that to learn and inculcate the varying attitudes that come with possessing virtues that are not only rectify wrongs but with a practical know-how to relate to the honesty, generosity and openness of food. Responsibility is considered a quality that is proactively taken on when along life's journey one is met, perhaps unexpectedly, with a decision that would otherwise

have been foregone. Popke (2004) speaks of this experience as an aporia that spurs one into taking matters into her/his own hands. To think of responsibility in this way, then, is to assert that one *assumes* rather than accepts responsibility (see Barnett et al, 2005: 42), choosing to seek the connections that then clarify decisions to be made.

To open up connections and track geographical relations of actions, however, may not be enough to establish the locus and scope of responsibility (see Barnett and Land, 2007) or, more generally, ethical action. Many of the examples used in this chapter, for instance, took into consideration close relations as well as proximal others. They seem to suggest that a commonsensical notion of distance, such as those borne of ideas of concentric rings of (dis)care radiating outwards or displays of NIMBY feelings, are what define attitudes of responsibility and care. Or to put it in Smith's (1998: 15) words, that we appear to favour those "nearest and dearest" to us. That this relates to mere physical distance alone has been refuted by a number of authors (Boltanski, 1999; Barnett et al, 2005; Popke, 2006; see also Ethics, Place and Environment, 2000). Indeed, many are ambivalent about Singer's (1972) suggestion that ethics should be solely of a universalist nature such that nearness or distance makes no moral difference as one should extend the same moral obligations. It appears more useful to interrogate the channels which lead to the aforementioned movements that impel encounters and strengthen the connections made. To do so would mean that "the question is not only 'how far can we care' but also becomes one of cultivating a commitment to those relations that may increase the *intensity* of attachment and connectivity" (McCormack, 2003: 503, emphasis added). For example, as already been observed in the Alice Waters example, that streamlining the multiple to the singular creates an impression of a lessened distance between oneself and another. Or to use another example concerning nursing care, it is to show that modes of care should not be measured on whether given standards are met as much as on the *goodness* of care that ensured that 'goods' are striven for in practice, and 'bads' are painstakingly avoided (Harbers et al, 2002).

And yet, any such care and responsibility rendered is not completely devoid of the need for physical proximity. This is to say that distance should be considered in

physical as well as metaphorical terms. One manner of conceptualising this is in how the distinction of self and other is in some way predicated on how far the 'self' extends. Is cooking for one's child or spouse considered other or is family part of the self? Does one show concern for members in the group because these members are like the self? Can there be a show of disdain or lack of concern for another such member arising from possible conflicts within the group whilst one feels characteristically more akin to the struggles facing a distant farmer in Bolivia? A disassembling of what the self is also collapses physical distances and enables, through the SFM as a platform, a member in the USA to indirectly fund a conservation project in Bolivia such that the farmer in question is better 'cared for'. This, however, remains fundamentally different to the care and responsibility that Barbara and Rex render directly to their sheep, or that of the researchers who set up and follow through the said conservation project. The quality of responsibility and care that is enabled by distance may be different to that which arises out of material distance, though distance can be the singular factor that allows for the distinguishing qualities of care and responsibility.

This seems to suggest a second, related idea in which the self is stretched as such because it considers itself part of a collective or a certain community. As mentioned before, the intensity of these relationships matter and they determine how affective attitudes of care and responsibility may be. Campbell (1998) refers to the mapping of these connections as 'moral cartographies' where responsibility and care are territorialized as new ethical spaces in which encounters with alterity may occur. The prominence of these cartographies, I would argue, is dependent on questions regarding quality – such as 'goodness' of care – as well as quantity. How much do you care and how much do you feel your responsibility? In the latter case, I recall a conversation I had with Mara, a convivia leader in Vancouver, regarding 'factory ships' that were plying the open waters and flouting sea regulations. When the discussion turned on the Japanese love for fish and what I suggested was their passionate indulgence which blinded them to the reality of over-fishing, Mara responded that "not knowing what's happening is unethical...It's unethical to be ignorant. I'm sorry". Her response then is akin to what Young (2004) refers to as

political responsibility. Here, the scope of responsibility stretches to include the structural processes in which, through 'ignorance' or failure to otherwise address shortcomings, we are perpetuating so-called 'bads'. However, it is also precisely because it is individuals that make up the community to whom this responsibility belongs that each can contribute in ways that attenuate ill effects and improve on the 'goods'. Such acts, which Micheletti (2003) terms 'individualised collective action', allow individuals to combine self interest and general good to influence action at a distance.

Mara's slight note of apology exposes the tendentious nature of SF's ethical approach: that a disposition to act also means that there exists correspondingly a disposition not to act. Given the somewhat fragile constitution of ethical care and responsibility as an uncodifiable set of principles and morals, it is unsurprising that territories of moral cartographies that are charted remain dynamic. Indeed, a relational ethics suggests a certain "impossibility (in) grounding our ethical conduct" (Popke, 2004: 302). I would assert that it is especially in light of this that the interrogation and boundary between self and other is vital. An understanding of the intertwined self/other does not preclude a maintenance of alterity that is important in ensuring SF's social role as well as in giving voice to the integrity of food matter. This process furthermore is not exclusionary. Rather, it inhibits a spiral towards purely self-serving purposes and demands that one's ethics always has an element of being disposed to the other. It is aided by an intention to step beyond oneself and a positive desire to change things, rather than a passivity to bemoan the unacceptable that is 'happening to us'. It requires effort in the sense of acquiring more knowledge. And it calls upon the imagination to think about the other such that the capacity to act as such is increased.

6.5 Ethical limitations; ethical possibilities

A question remains: Where is the stranger in this? This trope speaks towards a real threat that the understated nature of a virtuous, embodied ethics is such that even a rigorous conception of the 'other' does not capture the stranger figure. For example, a shrink-wrapped banana may be 'other' to Debra but, to the regular supermarket

shopper, it is the norm. The banana then represents that which falls between the interstices of care and concern so much so that it is not even recognised as the other. Failing to be pegged within structural categories such as 'disadvantaged', 'poor', or 'ignorant', the stranger may be the middle-class prioritising food badly, the father who would like to cook for his children but has not the resources or time to do so, or a town that lacks local food sources but has been overlooked because it is not especially privileged or deprived. In regards to Levinas' conception of the 'other', there is also the possibility that a repeated confrontation with the face dulls the senses, or simply induces one to look away. Finally, to ask of every place for a blind adherence towards their contextual 'tradition' may not be suitable. It is incumbent, as noted before, that there is comparative inequality in food access and quality, with some places having the luxury in terms of time, money or knowledge of 'doing slow' more than others.

In the context of SF members I spoke to, it is fair to say that there is not a driving ethics broad enough to encompass the demands of the members. For while some feel the bond and clout of a community gathering together to effect an ethics of SF, others do not participate much in their convivium's activities. The reasons for this are often similar to any in which group dynamics are involved, ranging from indifference towards socialising with new members all the way to a fear of not being able to live up to their convivium's 'standard' during cooking for a 'potluck' event. Membership of the SFM in this case does not always reflect complex attitudes of care and responsibility. Rather, they appear to signal a conventional mode of generosity in which it is easier to invest in care towards faraway causes where there is little other contact than it is to display concern for a near (yet unknown) other for whom physical proximity may necessitate greater responsibilities. To rehearse the contentions of self and other that suggest that intention, effort and capacity are important to making the vital connections, it can be argued that these courses of action may be similarly employed to break off or attenuate such connections or even enable disconnections from one's locale and tradition. As the reasons that people come to associate themselves with SF are varied, setting down stringent rules is bound to exclude some members. However, its sometimes inscrutable nature makes

it hard to say for certain if the information or action to which members are proposing actually achieve the results as they perceive it to as there is ambivalence to whether they consolidate SF's mission.

There are things that are dismissed as they are hidden; situations that are perpetuated because of unthinking habits or thoughtlessness as they do from overexposure to the 'other'; circumstances that arise as well as result from the all encompassing nature of the SFM. Sometimes, it seems, the stranger is in the midst of us.

In light of this then, there are a few possible ways to rethink this notion of the stranger. Firstly is not to be fixated on the figure of the stranger as possessing a necessarily unknowable nature (Derrida, 2000; see also Barnett, 2005). To do so may be unproductive insofar as efforts of the SFM are precisely put into discovering the stranger-other. They are carried out with the aim to improve the connections made between food entities, producers and consumers in disparate spaces and times. To enact the virtues that arise out of these connections is valued within the movement. The second is to acknowledge that, whether we like it or not, we are already inextricably connected to others – things, people – and since we cannot fully determine who is in and who is out, there can be no stranger. Indeed, to use the metaphor of a stranger is to imply that it essentially different from a 'host' figure. This is an unhelpful dichotomy which understates the sovereignty of roles that is more often than not structurally premised on a relationship of power which swings between one (stranger) and the other (host). The stranger metaphor then is often inappropriate. In the third instance, Probyn's (1999) account of food and sex demonstrates the troubling substitution of food for sex and vice versa which does nothing to transgress their boundaries and the possibility of thinking otherwise about these categories. Reconsidering an ethics of self and other must involve a movement not only to interrogate the norms of inclusion and exclusion but also ensure a constantly open invitation towards knowledge and dialogue. It evidences an unrelenting response of hospitality to the other, stranger or otherwise.

6.6 Conclusion

In the final chapter of her book Corporeal Generosity, Diprose (2002) uses the analogy of 'writing in blood' to detail the affective 'blood' material and the complex investment of both self and other in an ethics of generosity. Despite the diversity of approaches, stances and practices, a similar ethics is found amongst those who subscribe to the SFM. Blood that is shed cannot be returned, yet those touched by it cannot but be changed by the experience. Tracing connections to improve on visibility and accountability, important as it is on its own accord, also opens up means of giving to the other in ways that do not demand reciprocity. The difference that is displayed in seeing another's blood – blood as corporeality as it is effort and work- moves and inspires the members to effect action in a multitude of creative and sometimes unexpected ways. In lieu of a direct experience, writing is an in/outlet attesting to that which cannot be present, that which cannot be made present, as well as that which in the act of writing is made present. Writing in blood then pushes the boundaries of what being ethically open to the other means, for no longer can we readily consign a thing or person simply to being a gourmand, a vegetarian, a cheese-maker, a mother, or a consumer. Instead, SF beckons one to consider ethics through the way we attend to our words and actions, the way we pay attention to the interrelated self and other, and the way we enact the virtues that we choose and live by in striving for the good life.

Chapter 7: Aesthetics and the Art of Slow Food

7.1 Introduction

> "Art is the supreme task and authentic metaphysical activity of [this] life"
>
> (Nietzsche, cited in Krell 1976: 379)

Nietzsche, in his forward to Richard Wagner in The Birth of Tragedy, asserts that the role of art, in life, is *supreme* and *authentic*. Exactly what this means may be fiercely debated, but what is less uncertain is that these terms, being nothing short of grand and superlative, thrust Art directly into the limelight, representing itself as the epitomized object of, presumably, an examined and ideal life. This is one way of looking at it. Another way to consider this quote however is to see it as an earnest request, a way of taking the exigencies of art so seriously that it insinuates the metaphysical with art's physical presence. Here, I am suggesting that attention is paid to what art 'is' as what it *does*. Art, then, is a bequest. It is a possible passing on of any and everywhere its effects, or what is commonly known here as its aesthetics. And it is this aesthetics that fulfils its essentiality and veracity. The quality of truth is not strained — its locution is that which flows seamlessly between art, aesthetics and life.

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the flow of art to life, via the path of aesthetics, lies at the heart and soul of the SFM. This, it can be argued, is the integral objective of the SFM as well as its radical subjectivity. As it will be shown, the tripartite imprint of art, aesthetics and life cuts its impression on the seemingly lofty aims of the movement as it bears on the gritty materiality of human and things. In one sense, this flow is encompassing. Not only will this flow bring together the various concerns of this chapter, it has, like the previous chapter on ethics, nested within it the thematic issues of the preceding chapters. A consciousness towards the weight and rhythm of time; an unveiling of the slow food commodity; and conduct of self and other

towards a good life: all these feature to some extent in conceptualising the aesthetics of slow food. Indeed, the stronger assertion here is that a singular regard for aesthetics cannot help but take into consideration these aspects – it is compelled to do so. In another sense, and drawing on an idea propounded by Deleuze and Guattari (1988; 1994), this flow is also immanent. That is to suggest that the categories – of art, aesthetics, and life – will become as indistinguishable from the flow which binds them together as the flow itself may be thought to be representative of these categories. Art that may render life *sensible* – in the full meaning of the word – would be furnished by what Alliez (2004: 69) says is the "ideal indiscernibility between art and life". The voices within the chapter, theoretically and empirically, of mine and the interviewees, will attempt to bear witness to this life that is rendered — slowly — sensible.

This chapter proposes to chart the following: first, it will introduce art, aesthetics and life as a set of ideas whose overlapping concerns allow for a possible conversation to take place regarding their impact on and relevance to each other. This will be conveyed in description as well as through various modes in which these crossovers occur. This translates, in the second instance, to what I have called the 'field of art' as the place where I had begun to pose this relationship to my interviewees, and in which their responses are explicated in the sub-sections titled 'artists at work' and 'expressing art'. An understanding of *touch*, I assert in the third section, is crucial as a sense in itself and works effectively as a metaphorical shorthand to negotiate art together with the bodies of people and things. These will be examined by considering four specific components of touch, namely: its universality, physicality, biological and psychological factors. The final section proposes that in its encounters, touch invokes life. The life of the present and future SFM, as well as that of their members and members-to-be, I assert, depend on the initial conditions of their touching point, an ability to discern encounters, and finally personal philosophies that are always in the process of making and creating themselves towards what they perceive to be slow-oriented goals. It will thus be through such expositions that the idea of the art and aesthetics of slow food, to paraphrase Nietzsche, may well show itself to be the supreme and authentic task of life.

7.2 Art – Aesthetics – Life

Art – hold it as a promise, or specifically, an object of promise. Promise however is a double-edged sword. For the Frankfurt School, art was held up to be what remained of the detritus of modernity. For Adorno (1984: 196), art was considered a social object whose "utopia...goes on being a recollection of the possible with a critical edge against the real... the possible, as promised by its impossibility. Art is the promise of happiness, a promise that is constantly being broken". The art object, in other words, stands as a melancholic redemption from the present. This singling out of the promise of art is arguably also evident when Marx (1844 (1988): 109) comments that "the forming of the five senses is a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present". Though it is clear that his concern here is more tailored to the present moment, and the alienation of the subject from the body which itself is subject to capitalistic exploitations, he advances an ideological position of the 'five senses' as an imaginative and transformative moment of production which the seemingly teleological path of commodities — labour or otherwise — may transcend. The object of art here is to fulfil contradictions that cannot be resolved more directly through social or economic practices (see Levinson, 2000).

This is not to say that art did not exist prior to such social and political agendas. Questions relating to the ontology and epistemology of art have long been posed, and the answers that followed have, especially when they regard the measured appreciation of the art form, taken on deterministic forms. The object of art, in many of these cases, was governed by conceptual and rational logic. Beauty, taste and pleasure, to name but a few, were the measures of appreciation by which art could be understood, and understood in a sort of pre-perceptual or pre-cognitive fashion that spoke towards the purity of reason. In Critique of Judgment (1790) for instance, Kant's pursuit of the ideal of beauty presents itself only when one comports a reflective and disinterested attitude within a *sensus communis* — a common, sensitive nature that we share — whereupon judgment may be made. Bourdieu, in Distinction (1986), speaks about the notion of taste as borne first and foremost of class relations, the result of which — that he refers to as 'social' or 'cultural capital' — affects one's

habitus and therefore her/his pleasure and appreciation of various art forms in a way that presupposes embodiment. Hence, for both Kant and Bourdieu, an explicit regard for hierarchy and differentiation defines art's objects as well as their purpose.

Hence it is that the autonomous art object, and its hierarchical distinction, meet with enthusiasm an epoch of progress referred to as modernity. Two aspects take a poignant hold on art here, and they relate to this modern period that is marked by the functioning and perfecting mechanisms of not only the market economy, but in tandem with that of an 'economy of the senses' (see Jones, 2006; Seremetakis, 1994). The first relates to the rapid bundling of art with its commodity form. Paradoxically, the making of a 'stand-alone' art object that was meant to be redemptive also conjures its precise divorcement from labour's sense-traits and a reification of hierarchies that were supposed to save it from itself. The projected idealism — promise, message, and vehicle — onto the object forgot that the necessity of art's material presence did not mean that art had to be an object. Art, in other words, needs objects, but it is not always a specific object (Mazzio, 2005). Any interrogation that focused in on art by only appreciating its specific entity will, under pressure, irretrievably lose the said object. The second aspect relates to the mimicking mechanism to treat the senses according to the efficiencies and technologies that define this epoch. With the practising of extreme divisions of labour, the senses were often divided from each other. Any subsequent inquiry that could be mounted on them, now as individuated entities, was often a symbol of advancement — a mastery in specialised reasoning and understanding. An individual, as per a discrete art object, could be scrutinised by each sense which, put together, would then explain their totality. The senses furthermore were prioritised according to three related criteria: knowledge on how to capture and contain the sense; a means of making it (publicly) visible; and finally an ability to proliferate such know-how. These criteria often served to cement vision at the apex of the hierarchy, followed by hearing, and then the 'lower' senses of taste, smell and touch respectively. They were demarcated by technological tools such as cameras and record players (see for instance, Benjamin 1999 (1936); Crary, 1999), the construction of distinct public places such as art galleries, concert halls and latterly restaurants (Classen, 1998), and the portability of

such like printed material. Art objects conformed to what Howes (2005: 246) refers to as the "the taxonomy of the five arts", namely architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry.

Aesthetics – a term whose diverse etymological beginnings bear many 'family resemblances' (Wittgenstein, 1958). Aristotle used the term *aisthêsis* to connote perception, and one whose 'proper sensibles' delineated the five senses that are referred to until present day (Wedin, 1999). In Modern Greek semantics, the term reflects a range of overlapping ideas. *Aesthánome*, for instance, is employed to mean 'I feel or sense, I understand, grasp, learn or receive news or information, and I have an accurate sense of good and evil, that is I judge correctly', just as *aésthima* denotes the twinned 'emotion-feeling' (Seremetakis, 1994: 5). Indeed, the word *aesthísis* is a collective term for the senses as well as the "action or power through the medium of the senses" (ibid); senses here are understood to be as material as the actions that define them.

Indeed I would assert that it is in the encompassing, somewhat imprecise nature of such definitions that a nuanced understanding of aesthetics is formed. There are, arguably, at least three seemingly opposed sets of definitions on whose contention may be teased out a working ontology of aesthetics that will be considered in this chapter. The first set relates to the different meanings of aesthetics. On the one hand, and somewhat belatedly, there is Baumgarten (1730, 1750), the acknowledged founder of the discipline of aesthetics. For him, aesthetics was a way of including the "lower cognitive faculties" (1750: 489) into a different type of knowledge that was distinct from the abstract ideas studied by 'logic'. It was hence a science of 'sensitive cognition' which put an individual in touch with an understanding of her/his own sensory experience. On the other hand, though no doubt building on this definition, Croce (1965: 25), an Italian philosopher, focused on aesthetics as embodied in "art [which] is essentially intuition... [and] intuition is truly such because it *expresses* an intense feeling" (1965: 25, my emphasis). Sense impressions here — 'intense feelings' — express art that is its aesthetics and vice versa, and it goes to reason that art (objects) and individuals are unified in their ability to express intuition.

The second set relates to the distinction between the 'natural' aesthetics of the environment and the 'produced' aesthetics such as that found in works of art. On the one hand, following in the ideas such as those of Dewey (1934), Urmson (1957), and Budd (2002), nature's beauty — what Dewey succinctly refers to as "an integrated experience in its immediate quality" (1934: 151) — allows one to partake of the sensory pleasure that it offers. With its ecological interconnections and harmony, nature, in other words, shows us something that is beyond our own conception. On the other hand, art and its objects are considered to be created and produced as acts of conscious volition. Welsch (1996) applies to specific things and broad processes an idea of 'aestheticization' in which an 'unaesthetic' is made and constituted to be aesthetic in a way that hitherto was only known to us in art. With myriad purpose, art here is more often than not designed for rupture — a provocation of the senses. What is or is not pleasure, for example, is reconfigured according to this difference (Telfer, 1996). This second contention, then, sets up interesting slippages between food as a providence of nature, corporeal bodies and their creative action, and forms of work that speak resolutely as art.

The third set returns to examine the tenacity of the link between aesthetics and art. Since Baumgarten's inception of the discipline, it has often been observed that a dichotomy exists between an aesthetics that solely regards artworks and an aesthetic for whom art is but one means — among other non-art entities — through which to experience and express sensory phenomena. On the one hand, those in the former camp would suggest that the dichotomy is fallacious, regarding both the assertions as mutually inclusive. Here, the link is considered fundamental: aesthetics' purpose is in the scrutiny and critique of works of art which would reciprocally serve to provide a fuller understanding of aesthetics itself. An element of idealism is contained within this notion. Recalling Aristotle's five senses, Welsch (2003: 22, original emphasis) comments: "the perspective of perception – which I take to be essential for art altogether, because artworks are meant to generate perception – favours an *aisthêsis*-focused type of aesthetics *even for the purposes of art analysis*" Those in the latter camp would beg to differ. For them, the link can be described at best merely functional; at worst, it is detrimental. I mentioned before the loss of the

art object. For this latter camp, art needs to be retrieved from its mere social aspect — art as artefact — and be guarded against what Buck-Morss (1997) refers to not as art, but an 'art idea'. There is a need to guard against any social and discursive action conjuring an object to such an extent that it supersedes and effaces the channelled attention towards that which it is supposed to matter — the aesthetic sense. In any case, whether as a "philosophical project directed at those, sensual, creaturely aspect of life" (Highmore, 2004: 312) or towards maintaining the integrity of art's function and purpose, it is apparent from the literature that there is an earnest willingness to take seriously the creative and productive qualities of the senses.

With this set of ideas surrounding aesthetics, a revisiting of the five senses — not as hierarchies, but as sensations — is due here. What this proposes to do is not to defy the naturalised sense categories but open them up differently, returning them to their simple qualities as much as creating new sensory formations and understanding, to recuperate, in Seremetakis' (1994: 10) words, "the wastage of the senses in modernity". It is incumbent upon us, especially regarding vision (and sound, though to a lesser extent here), to merge critical knowledge of the senses with a similar awareness towards their sensations. Colour, for example, is often described as 'qualia', that is as something that exists in a corporeal beings' sub/consciousness rather than as the physical properties (light etc) in and of themselves. To speak about colour, according to Vendler (1995), is to already voice one's impression of colour, requiring that it is brought out in the open by painting/picking a sample, naming it, comparing it, and talking about it. This assertion invokes once again Wittgenstein's 'family resemblances': any 'logic' of colour — the pertinent example here being the often-made comparisons between food entities — is not as important in theoretical/philosophical expositions but, rather, as expressions of analogies and comparisons such that there is then a generalised agreement regarding that colour. Colour is arguably not phenomenological, and cannot exist merely as a private sensation or as language; it is both that, and some more. Colour comes about through exposure. Set in more general terms, this idea of exposure also propels, in a different direction, a rethinking of the idea of visibility. It forces an evaluation of how the senses are increasingly attuned to things, people and events that are foregrounded —

'made visible' — and the mechanisms that enable them to be so. Discussions of exposure, furthermore, necessarily entail the terms of reception that follow. Aesthetic sensations cannot be separated from the questions of community – who it is who sees, hears, tastes, smells and feels; who is included, who is excluded; who is self, and who is other. Utilising a turn of phrase that I will return to, Rancière (2004) refers to this visibility as the 'distribution of the sensible'. His allegiance here is to the political realm, but a similar assertion can be made regarding the economic, ethical or even sensual realm itself, that such a distribution is:

> "a system of self evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common with the delimitation that defines the respective parts and positions within... revolv[ing] around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, and the properties of space and the possibilities of time"
>
> (2004: 12-13).

The so-called 'lower senses' here too have their own critical roles to play. As early as 1825 in The Physiology of Taste, Brillat-Savarin acknowledged that taste was "that one of our senses which puts us in contact with palatable bodies by means of the sensation which they arouse in the organ designed to judge them" (30). Here, taste is not a frailty of uncontrolled desires but rather a sense of its own making and fulfilment. He goes on further to list the three categories that taste follows chronologically: direct sensation, referring to the first, immediate impression on the mouth while the food to be tasted is still resting on the front part of the tongue; complete sensation, which are the impressions that follow as food passes through to the back of the mouth, assailing it with its taste and perfume; and considered sensation, referring to the judgement passed by the brain on impressions transferred to it. To this sentiment, however, can be juxtaposed an equally clear stance that to him, the tongue, but also the nose and the brain, cannot afford to disregard their 'palatable bodies'. Simply stated, and not unlike Marx's earlier assertion, the embodied senses are not a hindrance but a key to connections and interconnections. What these two postulations further suggest is that the burden of promise and the pre-consigned category of 'taste' is done away with in favour of the practising of sensory taste. I have spoken previously about provoking the senses. With regards to

taste, there is in confronting an unknown food substance a lack of "beautiful consistency between oneself and one's own sensations" (Hennion et al, 2005: 670). Taste is not pre-established, nor an attribute or property of its own accord. Taste is always 'in-action', between contact and place, or place and uncertain sensation, or sensation and suspended judgement whereupon "one turns towards oneself to appreciate an effect, an impression that is difficult to grasp" (ibid: 672). Indeed, even mnemonic practices are constantly restructuring themselves. Finally, there is a need to attend to the materials which support the practising of taste here, and the 'doing' of the senses more generally. For spliced within these 'in-action' actions are the objects, tools, devices, references, frames, supports and collectives that configure the deployment of taste. One should not underestimate the ability of the lower senses, in accordance with the elevated senses of vision and sound, to modulate the aesthetics.

Whereupon it becomes perceptibly difficult — though not impossible — to assign agency to the individual senses is precisely where one may revert to familiar aspects of life, as a basic denominator, to consider these senses. In this respect, Corbin (2005: 133) refers to touch and smell as "senses of proximity" — bodily immediacies that directly experience events. Smell is so essential to taste that Brillat-Savarin (1825: 41) regards them together as a "single sense, in which the mouth performs the degustation of tactile bodies, and the nose the degustation of gases". So entwined is one with the other that what is regarded as taste is often a result of smell. In another instance, Voltaire, in the eighteenth century, was credited for comparing taste in the arts to the tongue's ability to discern food, yet taste to him was nothing without touch — "Taste is not content with seeing, with knowing the beauty of the work; it has to feel it, to be touched by it" (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1999). These two quotations open up the senses of smell and touch on an essentially paradoxical front: they are pervasive but hidden, difficult to contain and capture; essential but, as we have noted before, derided. Yet it is these qualities that deny them conventional aesthetic viability — ephemeral, discontinuous, fragmentary, but at the same time, evocative, intimate and primal qualities — that turn out to be their very qualitative strengths in defining the aesthetic experience (Porteous, 1985; Drobnick, 2002). To be assaulted by the senses, in other words, is to be physically moved towards an

emotional and psychological response. Memory, for instance, holds as well as recreates itself on each new response; the mnemonic is always intertwined with the sensory. As Seremetakis' (1994: 9) asserts, "memory is internal to each sense, and the senses are as divisible and indivisible from each other as each memory is separable and intertwined with others". Any loss, therefore, is not so much of the senses per se but of the memory of the senses. Finally, given the premise that sensations are present and integral, it should be noted that what is not said does not equate to what is not experienced. As Corbin (2005: 135) states:

> "[One] can never be absolutely sure whether the emergence [of sensation] is an innovation, observed by reading documents, indicating transformation of the way in which the senses are used and of the emotional system or, more simply, the crystallization of new rhetorical forms...The banal is frequently silent, like the perception of a new emotion, awareness of which is not yet very clear, or a means of expression not yet fully worked out".

In this chapter and in view of such stances and current work on the senses, I work my way from the 'banal, frequently silent' sense of touch towards reclaiming the senses in aesthetic theory and, more importantly, practice. It is my assertion that understanding their entwined literal and metaphorical terms opens up in significant ways the multi-sensory connections that SF members, via words and actions, demonstrate in their daily lives.

Life — it is no more, and no less, the bringing together of these newly expanded notions of Art and Aesthetics. How Art and Aesthetics come to be thoroughly entwined as life, I contend, can be expounded on four descriptive fronts that motion towards a perceptual reconfiguration of this life. The first concerns, in Drobnick's (2002) terms, a pursuit of civilization. It is a pursuit that claims that the quest for art — as an act of 'civility' — is a quest for life itself, and vice versa. Rather than partaking of its grandiose connotation, this pursuit thus calls into question what it means to search for that which is civil. It takes the quest for progress, hope or the promise of progress to task. Jones (2006: 11), for instance, asserts that "[s]cience is the story we use to organise and measure such sensory phenomena. It is up to art and philosophy to make a *sensus communis* from our experiential sensory shift". Moving away from discussions regarding the dominance of one discipline or sense over

another, this is a stance of being generous towards what life is; a case where aesthetic sense matters. In a similar way, progress towards civilisation may be measured through the use of language — with its "sensory attributes of sound and texture [that] partakes of the world of natural objects and introduces a positive element in the sheer void that would surround a consciousness left entirely to itself" (de Man 1997: 69) — whilst accommodating the unsaid within the silences of proper language.

The second concerns the body as both a product and a constant remaking of life. In this respect, the artful body exhibits beauty, (formless) form and grace as a response not only to contextualising identities, or an ambivalent, over-determined reaction to these identities, but because, in Buck-Morss' (1997: 39) words, "something affects me from outside myself. My senses are affected. This is aesthetic experience". This so-called affect is at once instrumental as it is subjective. One can no longer speak of 'the subject' as much as 'forms of subjectivity'. In another respect, the body's dynamism is also intricately linked to its chronology — each event is a temporal and spatial embodiment. To bring back into the fold Lefebvre's (1994; Lefebvre and Regulier, 1985) rhythmanalytical project here is to examine the biological rhythms of these bodies in accordance with their involved movement of everyday living. This is a movement whose orchestration is necessarily biological but whose impulses is sometimes considered to merely 'find support' in the material body as it exceeds its planned coordination. Art and aesthetics reside in these movements.

The third front posits quite simply a re-examination of what knowledge is. It questions any narrowly conceived idea of cognition and impresses that elements such as emotional knowledge and memory are vital to what it means 'to know'. As Buck-Morss has famously asserted, "all cognition has, necessarily, a sensory or 'aesthetic' component". The lines that blur the domain of knowledge then are often the ones that lead to a more complete definition of what an aesthetic experience might be like. Last but not least is the description of life as an everyday event, an allegiance to the thematic of an expanded art/aesthetic (see for instance Welsch, 1996; 2003), in which a significant part involves the acknowledgment of both heightened (special) and mundane (ordinary) aspects that make up day-to-day living. Highmore

(2004) for instance, speaks out against the dichotomised bias made between the 'aesthetic' and the 'anaesthetic'. Arguably, aesthetics resides in joyful and tender affection as it does in tediousness and frustration. What is more it is precisely in its supposed monotony that an individual may be more meditative of her/his senses. Delay and quiet also contrast to a finer tuned sense of interruption; indeed, "total aestheticization results in its own opposite" (Welsch, 1996: 18).

The creation and sustenance of life depends on its mobility. The mode of transport here is the sensorium. Conceived in the seventeenth century as the seat and cause of sensation in the brain of humans and other animals, only those in possession of this sensorium were thought capable of bodily and perceptual sensations (Graham, 1999). Recent conceptions of the sensorium widen this understanding. It is acknowledged, for instance, that the sensorium is interconnected with the proprioception of a range of living entities. In this way, the sensorium can be considered to mediate the conduct of the body. However, it is not just mediator but also space and locale, being after all the 'seat' of an (irreducible) sum of an organism's perception. To pull this analogy further, it is also to say that while it is physically a 'distribution of the sensible' in that it allows for complementarities of the senses to take place, it is also a distribution in the terms Rancière (2004) has mentioned before, as the senses in art, aesthetics and life are necessarily political. The nature of the sensorium then is such that the relationships between power and the elaboration of culturally-distinct logics of sensuous reason — 'sense ratio' (McLuhan, 1962) — corresponds in nuanced and complex terms with an aesthetics that extends beyond the individual body to include the social (for discussion, see Highmore, 2004; Jones, 2006). Finally the sensorium exists as a duration. It is, I argue, the generous hope of the potentially possible as well as the sensory fecundity of the present.

What makes SF an utterly aesthetic movement depends, I assert, on three key ideas regarding the sensorium of life. They chart a necessary and dynamic spectrum on which SF members comprehend aesthetics in contemporary times. Conceived in this manner moves the SFM towards becoming 'essential and true'. The first idea concerns the movement from aesthetics as an experience towards aesthetics as an

expression. Giard's (1998) work on cooking, for instance, does not rely on established forms of sociological presentation, but rather on foregrounding the sensual realm of smells, tastes, and gestures that are arguably at the heart of aesthetics. The issue is one that pays closer attention to the acts of translation, correspondence and faithfulness when presented with the direct sensations expressed by SF members (see Highmore, 2004). The second idea concerns the movement from an object-centred analysis (food entity in and of itself) towards the activity of, as it were, becoming food. It is not that the object is no longer important. On the contrary, objects have gained importance not as metonymic, stand-in devices of art and aesthetics but rather as nature, food items, cooking equipment, as well as paintings and the like. The issue becomes less one of objective disinterest and contemplation, and increasingly of "attachments" (Hennion et al, 2005), aligning critical thinking with interest, passion and the activities of actively harnessing the aesthetics. It is a movement, in other words, from the hermeneutic to the heuristic (O'Sullivan, 2001). The third idea brings together the individual and social bodies as collective moments as, truly, 'common sense'. There is perhaps no more succinct way to describe the aim of SF. There have been calls to regard an 'aesthetics beyond aesthetics' (Welsch, 2003), or an 'aesthetics after the end of art' (Buck-Morss, 1997). However, they are not calls to dismiss art, or aesthetics, or life but rather calls imploring the vigour and rigour in a necessarily polygenetic and creative atmosphere. Such interrogations allow back, without shame and reprehension, art into its proper field.

7.3 Arriving at the field of art…

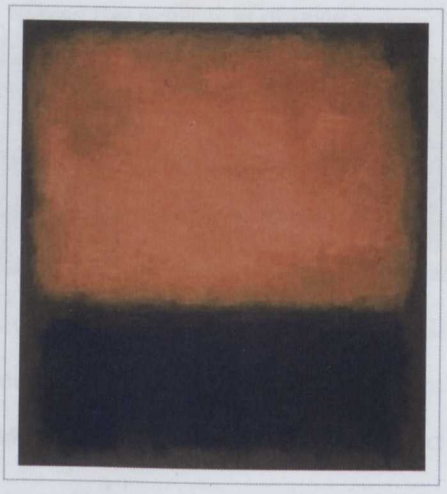


Fig 6: Mark Rothko No.14, 1960, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art©

'Abstract art' demonstrates that in its 'flatness' it can anti-represent the various contexts that art has needed to be entwined with. As Rancière (2004: 16) says, "the artist who abolishes figurative representation [is] the revolutionary who invents new form[s] of life". My employment of art to interrogate this particular version of aesthetics took a fairly conventional route. During a meeting with a lecturer, I noticed a Rothko paining on his wall. This modernist artwork reminded me of my time in Berkeley, California where, taking a class on Walter Benjamin, I was entranced by the vocalisation of art on issues — social, cultural, political — that were being conveyed. There was a poster shop just down the road where I had forged an intellectual appreciation of art with theory. Now however, this Rothko painting spoke to me differently. It was a colour palette, and one whose intensities and hues portrayed the tastes of food passing through my mouth. The strokes applied showed intended taste textures, the weight of flavour, the fleetingness of spice, a starkness that did not detract from the food object. My present experience of this same art was touching me differently.

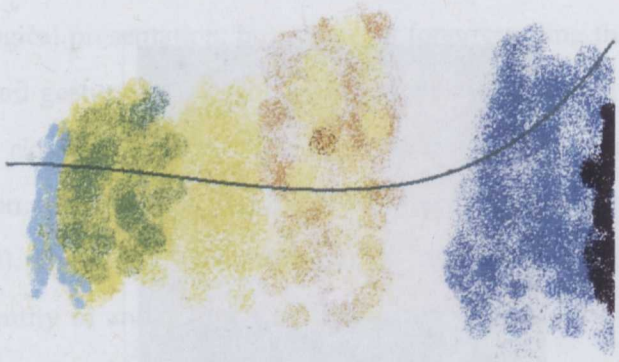


Fig 7: Personal drawing of a SF Olive Oil tasting event

Using Rothko as an inspiration, I attempted a visual expression of a recent olive oil tasting event that I had attended. This was a palate spectrum in which I translated the taste of five olive oils into colour. While the line drawn through showed the overall pleasure factor I found in the oils, the colours indicated a certain progression, especially within the oils in the first and last cases, from first impression through to swallowing and any lingering aftertaste. These corresponded with lightness or weight of the oils, the depth they exhibited, and more specific ideas of freshness, youth and their filtered/unfiltered nature. This was not to direct interviewees towards a set or validated pattern of answering. Rather it was a personal example serving to open up the sensorium at a particular space/place juncture. With the exception of a few nods of puzzled interest, many of the responses could hardly be predisposed.

In comments directly related to Rothko, Cheryl pointed to the division between the orangey-red and the black and said:

> 'I think I've finally admitted why [Rothko's] paintings are so pleasurable to so many people who can't explain it. You start off by looking into this horizon and see the land; it puts you into the landscape and immediately connects you to something that you understand. It's a basic experience'.

For Susan, it was the colour relations that brought the painting together. 'This orange colour... it bleeds into the blue. A lot of time, this happens with taste, one thing

bleeds into another. It's like something hits your palate here, and then further back, and that kind of mimics for me the sensation of taste'.

The ideas of experience and dynamic relations — like the 'bleeding' colours — were also taken up more generally regarding both the pictorial examples. Members were able to connect these images and apply them to various art forms that they themselves were engaged in. These were wide ranging and included sketches of gardens (Ann), quilts sewn on the theme of eggplants (Gail), and potteries which were designed for commercial purposes (Aletha). In particular, an art form that was frequently used as a means of comparison was that of music:

> 'There's a natural comparison to food and music, and art and music. You know, music is a language, food is a language, art is a language, speaking English is a language... maybe that music makes it feel like I've eaten something good, so I can talk about it through food. It's always also about something else and not just food — it's a way to communicate. It makes *total* sense'
>
> (Hsiao Ching)

Vito, a food caterer, explained this communication as a memory, likening it to a song which reminded him of an 'old girlfriend from high school, and you feel kinda good... you feel something'. Compared to a 'top 40s hit which you hear over and over' — like 'food for energy' — this song has an elevated aesthetics whose reprise is always pleasurable. Similarly, Susan used the analogy of 'live' and 'stereo' music to account for the slow food experience, an 'immediate, like it's all around you' feeling compared to the 'recorded' or 'mono' sounds of fast food. For David, music is not an analogy but rather works to complement his meal:

> 'Often we would put music on to accompany the dinner, and the selection of the music is often dependent on what we are serving. It's like...lilting, soothing, not intrusive. It sorta helps with the mindset, almost like a palate cleanser, [so] you can concentrate on what your nose is doing with the food...let the tongue do its job.'

Whether it is a language, memory, specific (musical) quality or an atmosphere setter, there is a sense that music *does*. On its own, a piece of music extends itself by varying its tempo, tone and tune. Entwined as an art form with other things and beings however, the music plays itself out differently. It enacts a range of moments, some more musical than others, but all on whose account it relies on as well as performs

into being. An object of art is then arguably not only a creative thing, but also a creative process. And it is one that builds upon the intervention and mediation of (creative) people.

7.3.1 Artists at work

> "I [am] always interested in creating a space where we are comfortable. For me, a place is like a puzzle, and we put all things together, and the person is the one that fits. If there's no one, there's no point having that space".
>
> (Frederique)

Frederique, a proprietress of a very well-regarded guesthouse cum restaurant on Vancouver Island, is explaining to me her role in the establishment in tandem with her interests in art and interior design. Rather than her statement reflecting any aggressive assertion regarding the importance of personhood, it seems to describe quite succinctly two major pursuits of an artist: the ability to draw inspiration from elsewhere coupled with the ability to create something anew. The case of the former has been shown in the way members were able to activate and use music to advance their enjoyment of food. In the field, I was fortunate enough to also encounter professional artists for whom the pursuit of both these aims was evident in their craft as well as their food practices. I highlight here some of these confluences:

> "I do see things, and I see... the interesting colours and textures that happen in food preparation. Sometimes I'm inspired by those things, and then I will try to bring those colours and textures out here while I'm working, and see where it takes me."
>
> (Debbie)

> "I look at everything as a practice — my practice of cooking and sharing meals, my practice of pottery; it's almost as if one feeds into the other. I use very similar tools as I do in the kitchen. The spoons, the bowls, sponges... it's all the same. It's taking an ingredient, and figuring out what visually looks beautiful with it, what flavours meld together, and how to make the end product, and the end product then being shared."
>
> (Stephanie)

As per cooks who do not just sit down to enjoy the works of their labour, the idea of process, or 'work in progress', plays a big part in their making of art. The studios that artists work in are not unlike kitchens, filled with tools and utensils that overlap in these spaces. Debbie, a process artist, uses the mixed media of paint and encaustic to

create her art pieces. She particularly likes the latter which she describes as 'wax-like' for its 'immediate, spontaneous' nature which fuses and melts colour and texture into each other in a way that does not easily give in to 'representation work'. There is also a process of ceding and collaborating with the material as Aletha, another artist, describes below:

> "I don't do a tonne of drawings, but I know I want things to be a general size, I know I need to do certain things, and I know what I'm looking for. But when I start making something, there's something about working with clay that it's gonna do what it's gonna do... I gotta go with what the clay is doing as well. I'm collaborating with that chunk of clay, and I think it comes out similarly because I'm doing it, but I don't know what the end thing is going to look like when I start out."

Aletha's approach is akin to James', a baker I spoke to, who reasoned that it was the unpredictability of the ingredients and the 'elements' that kept a baker 'honest and humble' because it was hard to cover up one's mistakes. For both Stephanie and Aletha, the art of pottery is one whose end product needs to have benefited from this very attention to process. Art, then, is attained not only through process but also through practice. As Stephanie further explains:

Fig 8: Stephanie's pottery, photo taken by author

"For me anyway the one word is 'ritual'. In my pottery, everything is pinched by hand. So I'll start with a piece of clay and start pinching it to make a vessel. I don't try to alter it other than get it as thin as I can. It's about the edge, it's about the shape. And they're very meditative, doing something over and over. The shapes have changed over time, the elegance has changed over time... The movement becomes more elegant; less effort [is needed]. The pieces become effortless. I guess cooking is the same way. When you have the dialogue, you have the ability and you have the material in your hands and in your senses, and then what you make is about that process."

Transforming edible entities into a well-made dish is similar to the formation of art at the hand of a sculptor. Whether via tools of trade or direct tactile contact, the material is worked through and weaves its way to create something that is of its (slow) moment: the production of such an art then can be distinguished from its reproduction. What may be less distinguishable is the art from the artist. It is not that things in themselves are not art. Rather it is that any collaboration towards art or artfulness henceforth cannot be sensibly separated without a violence that will destroy its aesthetics.

This affirms a particular understanding of art. Art, moulded in this fashion, is not only present in myriad forms but continually changes its effects as it is shared around. Debbie, for instance, showed me pieces that were bound for a fund-raising 'Slow food and Art' exhibition. Though they were to be displayed and titled gallery-style, she was careful to guard against over-suggestion. A piece in which she had in mind as 'salt' was titled *NaCl*, using instead its chemical symbol which she felt gave better credence to the structuring of its taste. Another one she called *Caliente*, hoping that by using the Spanish word for 'hot' as a crossover term, its many different meanings — from fiery spice to temperature and even sexual temperament — could be variously understood by the audience. There is a sense that art that is shared has to be allowed to develop in this spirit; namely, as an organic entity evolving such that it is both flexible and persevering at the same time. As Aletha comments when she muses on her own pottery product line:

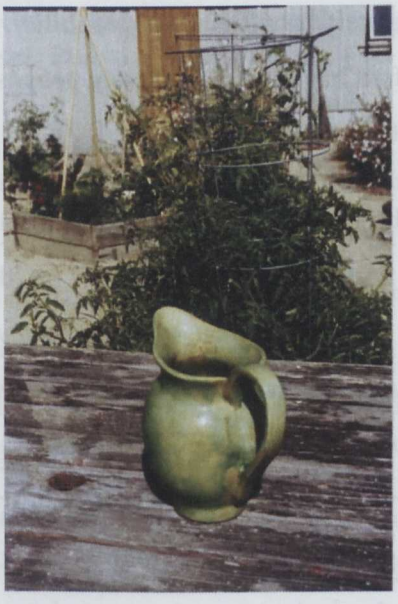


Fig 9: Aletha's pottery, photo taken by author

"I had friends who were in the business of making food look beautiful. So there was a certain artifice about it. But it got me thinking about what it was I wanted to put out...If you're going to make a plate, it's what it is. But I wanted to enhance the whole experience and bring another dimension to it: I wanted it also to be a chameleon. So I make thirty different pieces, a dozen colours...I wanted to make a number of different things so that [customers] could pick and choose. It was something I created but they got the final choice of really choosing the combination they liked so that when they brought it into their home, it wasn't a prop but [made] food look really comfortable and beautiful...liked it all went together [and] moved them in its own particular way."

7.3.2 Expressing Art

Aletha's wish for her intended customers begs a question: how does art move people 'in its own particular way'? By dedicating the section above to artists who work in making objects and food aesthetic, I have attempted to answer this by distilling the somewhat inscrutable practising of art. In so doing, it appears that focusing on its process bears an implicit suggestion that the boundaries between food and art object, as well as art and artist, can be elided in favour of transitions that occur more seamlessly beyond these preconceptions. This opens up the scope of what art is and how it may be expressed. In effect, it signifies a turn towards understanding the quotidian and pervasive possibility of art. Rather than view this understanding as diluting its value, it means that the appreciation, judgement and effecting quality of

art can be situated at the very crux of this possibility. Here, I will show that expressing such qualities of art has been discursively proposed by members to follow ideas relating to colour, texture, balance and flow.

Red and intense to the core. These were the exact words used in the previous chapter to describe the strawberries that Alice Waters served on the plane. Of course the relation of food to **colour** and vice versa is nothing new. Aristotle, for instance, considered his choice of seven basic tastes to have kinship with seven corresponding colours (Stratton, 1917). Not unlike Robert Burns' declaration that his love is like a 'red, red rose' however, contemporary understandings of this relationship have also included additional meanings. For Debbie, the colours of art and food display similar connotations. The purple of eggplant was 'connected to you higher self, and in childhood, a very pleasurable and euphoric kind of experience' while red was obviously the 'colour of life' and the green of vegetables 'serenity'. Interestingly, 'chocolate is [just] fun, it's whatever it is'. Colours are conceived here as an extension of self as they are of food, a mediating component that connects the sensual and the semantic. This, then, suggests that colour itself is organic. As Hsiao Ching, a food journalist, tells me:

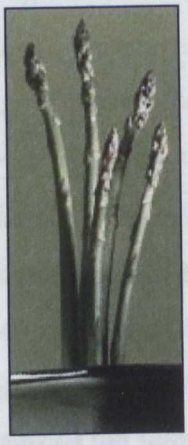


Fig 10: Asparagus Photo, 2003, Seattle Post-Intelligencer©, reprinted with permission

"Once I was visiting a friend, and he took me to tour this beautiful garden where everything was just green. All shades of green — green on green on green, it was just amazing! I couldn't believe how beautiful and saturated the colours were. I didn't have a camera so I told myself: remember that scene. [Later] I happened to be working on a story about asparagus, and we had to shoot photographs. So I was talking to the photographer and

saying 'you know, what if we showed this asparagus with the green background'. So it's the same green on green on green. That experience with art — in nature — transferred to my work here'

Colour not only moves and is transposed, but is disposed of character beyond its name. Often, when members spoke of something in terms of its 'red' or 'green' colour, they were already relating it to an object's intensity, and in the case of food, its quality. Jon, for example, explained to me that a piece of fresh fish exuding 'red slime' would take on a shade so bright and shiny that 'light will dance off it'. By contrast, the lack of an organic or natural intensity was often frowned upon. This was the case with the often-mentioned 'skin deep' red of 'supermarket tomatoes' which proved to be white and tasteless on the inside. It was also the case in terms of artificial and/or cosmetic colour. Roger, who was trying to describe the colour of *Cheese Whiz* to me, resorted to pointing to a picture surrounding us saying: "Sort of like that colour of the mountain in the sunset over there... but lighter. It's orange rather than yellow like cheese. A colour like no cheese on earth". Real cheese 'on earth', as it were, would never attain the unnatural and over-manufactured colour of this industrial cheese.

The tactility of both hand and tongue to feel, albeit differently, is a large part about what **texture** is about. The texture in both process and product, the feeling of a material back and forth, is important in the finessing of an art object as it is of food. James the baker, similar to other cooks and artists I spoke with, expressed a sentiment of things 'feeling in place' — days when the 'hands are good' and 'the dough feels right' such that the co-production was tantamount to good 'craftsmanship' that was appreciated by his customers as it had 'an intrinsic value of something made by hand'. He was quick to add, however, that this feeling was also balanced on a 'moment of uncertainty'. Such, it seems, is the forte of texture. It has the ability to prise open monotony. It also creates unexpected sensuality. Sandy, for example, recounts how interesting textures of food in her mouth will suddenly jog memories of her sneaking into her mother's bedroom to eat crystallised ginger and remembering the 'burn-y' sensation down her throat intermingled with sweetness. This desire for texture was also extended to her love for unstrained raspberry sauce

with 'little pips' that add 'bitiness' to them. Finally, Cheryl's account attests to the pleasure that texture can provide:

"As much as [we] talk about flavour, texture is a huge part of the experience, and I think that experience is a texture in different art forms, one easier to connect with. The difference between smooth and rough, and crunchy. These things are quite vivid to us. And sometimes it seems so simplistic to talk about it because it's obvious so maybe we don't. I remember times when I had a seed stuck in my teeth, and you crunch on it later and it's like: ooh, that's nice. You enjoyed it while you were eating it, that thing that had the seed in it, but you almost enjoy it more when one seed comes back to surprise you later. If you're just gobbling and swallowing and not really chewing, then you're not experiencing texture."

Elements such as colour and texture, if they collaborate well together, may contribute to the notion members refer to as **'balance'**, exhibiting a semblance of what it takes to fit what Frederique had earlier called a 'puzzle'. The discordance of texture metaphorically brings out colour just as colour is textural when applied in an artistic sense. As Susan says of her meal preference:

"There are usually three things on my plate, each complementing each other in flavour, colour and texture. There's one starchy vegetable and one leafy and, you know, maybe a chicken, and one might be on a slightly sour side and another a little on the spicy side. Visually, it's neat."

There is a sense embedded in Susan's account — essentially a description of a square meal — that a well-considered everyday meal can be balanced and artful at the same time. Or indeed, that balance and artfulness can also derive from non-manipulated food simply flavoured, albeit with a touch of unexpectedness:

"The other night a friend invited us over, and she made a million different little things, a bowl of cabbage and corn and sour cream. There was green bean that had been sautéed with shallots. Everything [was] from the garden. Each little bowl had a surprise in it, each one a beautiful colour, and each one done with a different herb. So there was this wave of intense flavours coming through, there was watermelon with mint... it was just an amazing array of colours and textures and flavours and smells. And I felt like I was in heaven!"

(Stephanie)

The 'wave' that Stephanie mentions is analogous to the **flow** of art. Or more accurately, the wave *is* flow as it motions towards an aesthetics of both art and food, culminating such that it makes no sense to speak of one without the other. The

process of creating art and that of growing/cooking food is inseparable because their resulting qualities are co-produced and hence co-constituted. As June, a jam maker mentioned previously asserts, her quest in making the most 'beautiful' jams is fulfilled when her customers proclaim that her jams taste *exactly* like the fruit/s in question. This flow, furthermore, is fluid. As stylistically referenced and expressed by SF members, it can relate to the way dinner is laid out on a plate, the way a baker fashions dough or the way one finds pleasure in discovering a morsel of food in between one's teeth. In other words, it is possible to change scalar proportions and temporal moments without upsetting its integrity. It is a flow that, according to Alison, acknowledges that 'the earth is one big place, but it's not the same place'. This flow could be conceived of as a singular item always exhibiting a 'sense of place' without an attitude of parochial elitism or it could refer to collective food networks as already a global artwork. Even the radical is possessed in the flow. Like Frederique, who notes that art extends to following what each season has to offer naturally as opposed to the year-long availability of everything; taking time in our 'faster and faster' world to talk to an artisan in appreciation of her/his work; taking care of the cheese by letting it rest and brushing it later to make the rind a different colour which is unlike that produced in a factory; and breads that are hand moulded into different shapes. As she insists: 'No one can tell me all these are not art!'.

Many of the intertwinements of food and art thus far have expressed an aesthetical view that is very central not just to understanding aesthetics in a certain manner but more importantly, to its very fulfilment. And, I think, it boils down to this: that aesthetics, as it is initiated here, is intimate. Palpably, there is a difference between art that is 'beautiful but in a formal way' (Sandy) and art that you live with. Roger, for instance, was a former art editor of a newspaper who disliked very much art presented as *Kultur*, deliberately using the German term to connote what he believed were ideas of nobility and 'fatuitous sentimentality' that opposed art and culture in 'our everyday sense'. As Aletha comments when I asked her about her love for art in general:

"There's art that I really respect and enjoy, but I'm really probably not gong to take it home. When I look at it, I appreciate it in my head, there are fewer senses involved... there are fewer parts of me involved — it's an intellectual exercise. Then there are some other aspects, it becomes more of a whole body experience. Food is the same way — the layers of pleasure, and how deep they are, and there's more of the whole body and the soul, and because of that [it's] something that I would want to live with."

This seems to suggest that in more ways than one, an artist at work is not unlike a cooking enthusiast in the kitchen. With almost identical tools and equipment, art and food objects undergo similarly creative and intimate processes and in fact are already in the process of doing something. At different moments on a time/space continuum, they are material objects of memory as they are of desire, passing through textured tones of colour definitions and exhibiting various characteristics of flow, balance and form. They are formed, furthermore, at the hands of the artist or the cooking enthusiast in question, intertwining the sensations of art with that of the everyday. What draws people and food/art objects together is biological, emotional and psychical: this, I believe, can be explained via the capacity of touch.

7.4 Introducing touch

I speak of the capacity of touch, at the onset, in both material and metaphorical terms. This is not to suggest that 'everything is touch'. Rather it is to recognise two things that make this dual term usage necessary: firstly, that material touch is a way of activating verbal and emotional expressions such as those relating to a thing being 'very touching' or having 'an artist's touch'; secondly, that touch as a metaphor draws its inspiration from one or many of the felt sensations that we consider physical. In this section, I introduce touch as a series of ideas. As a prelude, I tell the stories of Judy and Nancy, two SF members whose accounts of sensory 'barriers' shape the subsequent portrayals of the sense of touch:

Judy, a vegetarian, tells me about the fruit and vegetable-themed convivium meetings that she gets excited about. When I asked if it was the effect of seeing on one table 'variations on a theme' as an artful thing, she chuckled and heartily said no. In fact, though she 'loves poetry', she remembers taking a whole class on Milton's *Paradise Lost* in college and finding that it was 'totally boring' and that she 'couldn't stand him'. She was later told that what people find wonderful about Milton are the pictures of the world that he creates which they can see and which she obviously can't. Her two favourite poems coincidentally have diagrammatically a villanelle form, which leads her to conclude that the art form she

understands is rhythm. She tells me about being very taken by 'A Love Supreme', an audio-visual short film by Nilesh Patel that records a *samosa* being made with the skilled hands of the film director's mother, and later tells me about an Indian recipe that she recently followed, regaling in detail the 'grounding of the cumin and coriander and putting in the hot water to grind a paste' for a chopped-up zucchini.

Nancy, a homemaker, cooks daily for herself and her husband, often hosting dinner parties for friends on a regular basis. The previous day, she had started preparing for dinner at 9am, with a menu that consisted of roasted nuts with rosemary, raw vegetables with two dips, mini cheese crisps, crostini with figs and gorgonzola, gazpacho, white asparagus salad, grilled monkfish, shrimps and scallops, baby artichokes, potatoes in garlic and oil, an almond cake and a fresh fruit compote. I detail this because as I am marvelling at her capability as a cook, she tells me that she actually lost her sense of smell to a virus some years back. She cannot tell the difference between one olive oil and another 'which is a terrible thing to admit' but asserts that she can tell good coffee from a bad one because 'it's a tongue taste, not like aromas'. She then likens preparing meals to 'going to a rehearsal for a concert before actually attending it' and enjoys knowing what goes into her food and which of those flavours she can taste. When she does eat out, she values the availability of food that is 'fresh, organic and local' and more than having a particular meal, revels in 'being in that food atmosphere'.

As I propounded in the previous section, the aesthetics of art and food is not simply in its said appreciation or admiration, but also in living with the sensations it affords. Judy here appears to have zero attraction to visuality but enjoys the various connotations of rhythmic concordance, a poetic beat that extends from the written word to the way she describes the motions of the hands — both in the film and via the grounding, chopping and grinding internal to the recipe that she follows. For Nancy, her deliberate and sophisticated meals are conjured without what is often considered an essential trait in cooking — the sense of smell — but her wide-ranging knowledge of food and cooking methods allows her to take pleasure in the preparation of a meal. A pertinent question arises: do they enjoy the aesthetics of food less because of their sensory impairments? This question cannot be easily resolved, but here I am suggesting that it is precisely in understanding certain notions of touch that we derive means towards its proper answer.

7.4.1 Universality

First and foremost, touch is not just crucial to the formation of aesthetics; it is, I assert, a necessity. One reason this grand claim can be put forth is in acknowledging the universality of touch. Much has been made about the lowly sense of touch as compared to the scopic regime of the higher senses such as sight (for discussion, see

Crary, 1999; Korsmeyer, 1999). Such ideas are often popularly conceived as accounts of modernity in which touch lacked the hygiene and the dexterity to meet the advancements of technology and material devices that could preserve and hypostasize touch (Benjamin, 1999 (1936)). These ideas, however, have their origins much further back in history. Etymologically, the phrase in Spanish for 'I feel it' –*Lo Siento* – in its verb form, *sentir*, also has the meaning of 'smell' in French languages (Brennan, 2004). In English, 'taste' has its 13th century origins as touch or feel (Williams, 1976), and not just that for, as Ackerman (1991) argues, that itself is a derivation of the root word *taxere*, which in Latin means to touch sharply. In other words, there has been for some time a universalised cross-referencing of touch with its other senses such as smell and taste, including the form that it takes (sharply). Touch, then, is common/sense. Indeed going back further it may be observed that, especially as detailed in the treatise *De Anima*, this was concordant with Aristotle's consideration of touch. A sense shared by humans and animals alike, touch was considered in its various aspects and relationships of which three in particular are pertinent here: as the 'simple sense' in which sentient beings could see and hear and, so to speak, grasp themselves (Heller-Roazen, 2007); the 'common sense' which both cross-referenced and embodied all the other senses (Freeland, 1992; Manning, 2007); and the 'inward sense' (*De Anima* 423b) as its functions were not situated on the skin but 'seated' inside the body and hence most connected to the heart. These propositions formed a conundrum for Aristotle. For one, he considered the heart as the seat of the intellect — that distinguishing trait of humans from other life forms — yet it was undeniable that touch was also inherent in most living things. He considered an ability to peruse the totality of 'form' more important that any partiality of 'matter' (*De Anima* 424a), yet this treatise was as much a general physical theory as it was an empiricist epistemology that supported a notion of touch as a pre-eminent source of information regarding the physical and material world (Freeland, 1992). Finally he did not consider skin as an organ of touch, yet found it hard to reconcile that, unlike the eyes or ears, it was both a perceiver and medium of sensation (*De Anima* 653b). This was made all the more perplexing as skin could be the perfect medium not altered by touch as it simultaneously demanded that

perception could only be realised *along* with it. To summarise, touch was considered to be epistemically too common, corporeally too involved, objectively too close, and materially too needy.

Arguably, this harsh assessment was attenuated by Aristotle himself, for if the virtue of touch was on balance *eudaimonia*, then its universality was certainly its strength:

> "Temperance and self-indulgence...are concerned with the kind of pleasures that the other animals share in, which therefore appear slavish and brutish; these are touch and taste. But even of taste they appear to make little or no use... [for] they hardly take pleasure in making these discriminations, or at least self-indulgent people do not, but in the *actual enjoyment*, which in all cases come through touch [as] in the case of food and in that of drink..."
>
> (*De Anima*, 1118a: emphasis added)

Here, there is a begrudging willingness to accept that one's happiness — as mentioned in the Ethics chapter as the final and self-sufficient character of 'good' — in enjoying food and drink has already, serendipitously, taken into consideration a judgement of taste as a slightly 'higher order' sense perception of humans. It also seems to suggest that touch and its effects (in this case, happiness) are universal precisely because they are collective. Touch is shared. And as was discussed in the chapter on the slow commodity, experiences can be collectively summated such that shorthand references to and meanings of what it is to 'grow a tomato properly' are easily understood by its members.

However, it is also clear that these references mean nothing if they have not been experienced by individual members themselves. And therein lies a final paradox: touch is also universal because of the countless individual experiences involved. The origin of touch, or its touching nature, is often independent of the individual or thing experiencing that touch. In many cases, it is necessary that this is so. To follow on from the previous example, each conception of 'growing a tomato properly' requires an individual's practical and/or discursive experience to enact it into being. In this way, the universality of touch is in its singularity as much as its collectivity. Touch is able to pass from one state to the other because it is both medium and mediator possessed of what Roe (2006) terms a 'material connective aesthetic'.

7.4.2 Physicality

This leads onto a second claim, which is that the connection that touch makes has to be understood in its physicality. Where previously the characteristics of touch — proximity, corporeality, and materiality — were perceived as weaknesses, the contention here is that these traits should, instead, be considered strengths. They are what make touch absolutely compelling. On one level, all our senses are touching each other: to hear is to touch the eardrums with vibrating air molecules; to see is for light to set upon an object such that it hits back into the retina; to smell is to encounter the pheromones that are in the air. And as the etymology of touch has shown, touch is also multi-sensual. Take for instance what Alison says of her husband when asked about the experience of taste:

> "He's fanatical about music. When he tastes something really good, he closes his eyes and then you can see him, he starts to move, he doesn't even know it. His arm is swaying, and he's like...*yeah, that's good.* And you can see him!"

It was previously suggested that what we consider to be taste is more likely than not the result of smell. In Alison's husband however one can attend to a seemingly everyday situation with, so to speak, new eyes. Perhaps it was just a morsel of food, but from the guts the food entity is extruded onto her husband's being, a portrayal of an enjoyment that can be confirmed by his swaying and his 'eyes closed' gesture. Alison is also touched by this expression of taste. Barring any humming, her reception of this touch is best confirmed with her 'eyes opened'. In this way, it may be observed that members do not so much lack an ability to explicate a specific sense as portray this touch via the complementarities of their various senses. Indeed, the senses may be so physically connected that their passage through, as in this case, bodies is considered an "unlocalizable mediation" (Connor, 2005: 326): touch is irreducible. This is also in keeping with an earlier assertion by Michel Serres' (1998: 190) where he speaks about a body being an "orthopaedic sensorium", an experience in which the proprioception of bones, tongues, blood, stomach and eyes (as is the case here) move in exchange with her/his social world as well as with the individual interacting with her/himself. What this suggests is that the physicality of touch is not

only irreducible but, in some ways, exceeds itself, for each singular touch always produces multiple effects.

This of course lends an intrigue to touch that makes it hard to disentangle. Indeed, Serres goes on to speak about the entwinement of the senses as a 'knot' (see Connor, 2005: 323) which repeatedly precludes any effort to separate out the senses. In their apparent simultaneity, the multiple effects may not be perceptibly sequential or harmonious. As Aletha exclaims on her first experience with the durian fruit:

> "It's a thing of beauty, I love the looks of it, and I was so taken by it. (And then you opened it), and... how could something so wonderful have such a peculiar and gross combination of textures and flavours!? It became difficult for me to enjoy it then."

Here, the eye is overwhelmed by the hand, mouth and mucous membrane as the privileged touch points of food. A physical touch thus is uneven. I wish to argue too for a particularly important aspect of the body, namely, the face. Firstly, the face is a surface, a privileged projection of a body in continual movement. This in itself is not novel. Psychologists such as Silvan Tomkins (1995) and Paul Ekman (2003) have over the years conducted detailed analysis on the nuanced and wide-ranging emotional expressions carried on the face. The face, furthermore, is a production of touch, married with the spoken words of the mouth. The face is thus a physical force not only from without but also within. For a long time, there has been a separation between studying the physiology of the face as emotion and the discourses on how various facial expressions denoted the representation and display of people and bodies. This is a forced dichotomy as, to use a straightforward example, the fluid motion of reading a face and hearing that voice has already sewn together the sensation of touch with its emotions. In a way, this is already a form of 'reading' (Ahmed, 2004; see also Lipman, 2006). A more precise argument, as Brennan (2003: 19) among others have asserted, is that this conjoining is what makes feelings the way they are, as "sensations that have found a match in words". Feelings, in both Alison's and Aletha's cases, transformed physical and discursive action, and moved the witnessing of this realm of activity beyond its singular occurrence. Via redoing,

via etelling. Jon, a peach enthusiast and SF member, sums up this physical experience well as he recounts to me one of his many persuasive acts:

"Sometimes [the peaches] are over $3/pound, but I ask: How much would you pay for the peach of your dream? That awakens the spirits, wakens the senses. But I also notice that if you tell the story well, people are going to taste better. And it's not so much because of the story but, I think, the understanding. They take a bit of the peach, they'll close their eyes without a care for the person they're with...and then they'll say "oh god", and then you open your eyes and see the other person having the other experience. It's good stuff!"

7.4.3 Biological

The notion of a physical touch as discussed above is dependent on the biological contiguity of a person with another and/or other non-human entity. Why this assertion is important in its own right will be explicated by focusing on the intertwined senses of skin touch, and smell.

"Skin is basically a two-layered membrane. The lower, thick spongy dermis, one or two millimetres thick, is primarily connective tissue, rich in the protein collagen; it protects and cushions the body and houses hair follicles, nerve endings and sweat glands, blood and lymph systems. The upper layer, the epidermis, is 0.07 to 0.12 millimetres thick. It is primarily composed of squamous, or scalelike, epithelial cells, which begin their lives round and plump at the boundary of the dermis and over a 15-to-30 day period are pushed upwards, towards the surface, by new cells produced below. As they rise, they become flattened, platelike, lifeless ghosts, full of protein called keratin, and finally they reach the surface, where they are ingloriously sloughed off into oblivion"

(Hellerstein, in Ackerman, 2000: 67-8).

The quote above puts paid to any hastily conclusive description of what is often termed 'skin deep', for not only is the skin shown to be dynamic, it is indeed 'deep'. Here, I do not mean the depth to be mathematically but rather sensually significant. Touch's intensity, likewise, is perceived to correspond to this depth. Jon, for example, further recounts his quest for good fruit when he describes to me a perfect strawberry that has been ripened by sunshine:

"It has a gloss to it when it's very fresh, it shines and light will hit it and dance off it. And if you cut through it, it will be uniformly deep way all the way through, and if you squeeze, the juice on the plate is so fantastic that it doesn't even look natural!"

Against the ripening skin, the strength of the sun's rays touches upon the fruit and transmits the warmth inwards. Touch then is characterised not only by its tactility, but by various motions such as stroking, caressing, tapping, pressing and pushing. In using examples of fruit as a 'good' slow produce, for example, members often explained or invited me to cup or hold the fruit to feel how 'giving' the flesh was as well as its 'heft'. In the latter instance, this was based on the concept that a fruit's higher brix — a measurement of the ratio of sugars to water content — would mean that a denser fruit was likely to be sweeter, and perhaps more flavourful. As in the case for Jon, the sun's energy transformed the biological constitution of the said fruits such that they were more appealing to touch. The appeal to touch and assess the fruit is spurred on by a desire to eat it. Touch, it can be said, is borne of urgency.

And it is this urgency which inspires a change, for touch not only modulates, it also modifies. This argument takes at first instance a position that our "biological constitution of being" (Thrift, 2004: 59) is already considered to extend beyond a solely phenomenological, personalised realm of experience. It does so in two interrelated ways: by varying our bodily comportments to a specific environment (context) as well as by taking into account the ability to touch, and be touched via a transitory and transpersonal register. The changes that touch effects, in other words, are experienced and carried out corporeally, but they are not simply *just* that. As shown above, something passes in between the sun's rays to the skin of the fruit in question to one's observance and appreciation of it as such. A similar case might apply regarding one's biological sense of smell:

> "I think [truffles] are more smell than a taste, it's very musky and has this incredibly compelling scent. The white truffle you don't really taste anything, they shave it and it's like perfume: you have to smell it. Very appealing. Pheromones. You smell it and your head goes "buzz..."."
>
> (Valerie)

> "I know Frog Hollow's Farms but I didn't know the detail of organic farming. The methods that (the farmer) uses, you know he's very skilful. For pest control where they don't apply pesticides, it has to do with the pheromones of various pests and putting up things that either make them want to go away or lure them to another area so they stay away from the fruits."
>
> (Judy)

Pheromones form a paradox of sorts and challenge understandings of what it means to smell. In the quotes above, Valerie suggests they directly elicit an uncontrollable response as the smell rises from the nostrils through to the head; Judy on the other hand suggests their use as control factors that seek to impose boundaries on fruit and pests. To an extent, both are right. Pheromones are unmistakably chemical signals that may affect the olfactory nerves. They are pollen-like, airborne molecules that are secreted by the skin (Vroon, 1997). They are detected by ingestion (like in the case of the truffles) as well as (like in the case of the fruits) specialised chemoreceptors (Michael & Keverne, 1968). In Brennan's (2004: 75) words, they are "direction-givers which... traverse the physical space between one subject and another, and factor in or determine the direction taken by the subject who inhales and absorbs them". While Brennan expounds on the relationship of pheromones between human subjects, I suggest that non-human objects, like a truffle or a peach, may also contribute. In any case, it is undeniable that the 'direction' that a living subject takes upon receiving these pheromones relates to practices of alignment and ordering, mainly due to the complexity and intertwined nature of the sensory makeup. Smell is felt. In one sense, it is not a respecter of boundaries, affecting many human and non-human living entities. In another sense, the touch of smell meets its boundary and fulfils itself when it encounters a membrane that is a physical barrier or zone of interaction. In either case it is apparent that smell connects beings via their bio-sensory systems, and is responsible for aligning them — via 'unnoticeable odours' — in efficiently communicative ways by entraining one's hormonal and nervous system with another. In this way, it affirms another of Brennan's assertion that physical and biological effects are, in origin, social. A sociality that I would argue derives from the basic premise of touch.

7.4.4 Psychological

Indeed, my argument here is that the mental, neurological and psychological aspects of touch is not only important, but it is so because it thrives on this sociality. I make a careful, but mainly demonstrative gesture towards this argument for the scope of this statement extends far beyond that of the thesis. There are commonalities in the

terms used that gather around 'psychology'. One of this relates to the psyche. For Aristotle, the faculties of the psyche were nutrition, perception, and mind, in that hierarchical order. He argued that though the psyche was present in all living beings, plants would only show up their nutrition side, animals their nutrition and perception faculties, and humans in possession of all three — nutrition, perception and mind. For humans, to 'feed the soul', so to speak, would involve actively engaging these three faculties. This sentiment was evident when Alison, who also used to own her own cheese shop and is a wine judge, explained to me how she thinks her sense of taste/smell has come about:

> "You're tasting with your tongue and your sinuses... and the more you taste the more you learn. Because you have more things in your sensory library, and everything that you ever tasted and smelled is stored somewhere in your brain. The more you (practice), the more you learn how to access it. It literally builds its own pathways and then it goes... *click*, yes, there's where it's getting used and I can get to it faster."

Alison's reasoning of how she recognised taste through practice and experience belongs to the domain of the mind, the brain as physical structure and food/wine as the impetus. And though she obviously enjoys tasting and building her knowledge, she also demonstrates implicitly that an aesthetic sense does not arrive effortlessly. Lynn-Eve, a convivium leader, uses the American playwright Tony Kushner's quote about theatre as an analogy for what it is she thinks SF tries to achieve: 'It's really easy to make someone laugh or cry; what's hard is making them think'. What, however, does it mean to have something running through your mind or your psyche? And how does that translate to what it means to think?

The first argument considers a notion of 'drive' as propelling this thought process. While the impetus to eat may be a biological drive, the ideas surrounding drive more generally are reflected in psychoanalytic frames, especially in the work of Freud. He speaks of drives as being the root source of various human motivations, instincts and identifications. However drives should not be thought of as 'states of origin' in and of themselves. Thinking this way isolates them from their own effecting qualities, namely, the feelings and sensations that are realised as a consequence of them. As Ahmed (2004) points out regarding the subjects of pleasure and pain, it is important to consider drives' 'becoming conscious/ness' — it is not pleasure or pain that

'drives', but the awareness of this pleasure or pain physiologically and mentally. Debra, for instance, recounts a recent olive oil SF event which had subsequently piqued her interest towards the oils she chooses to use:

> "It was very interesting, it was Mr. Cody from Cody Foods in Sacremento and he really knew what he was talking about, the different varietals from the different countries, the process, how it's made... it's everything, a whole package. And it wasn't about eating at all — we just tasted — and the way you do it's not really a pleasant experience, but it was very good. And now my approach towards olive oil is different. I'm thinking about what I'm buying, I'm smelling things before I taste them, it's really got me thinking about things differently."

The fact that tasting olive oil is 'not really a pleasant experience' does not deter but instead appears to increase Debra's desire for good oil, as her mind appears to work against her instinctive sensory system to bring them into unison. Yet this does not only happen in formal or instructive situations. One also forms and receives what Connolly (1999) has termed "thought-imbued intensities" in instinctive, everyday situations. Here, drives are complemented by what psychologist Silvan Tomkins (1995), following in the work of philosopher Spinoza, has termed 'affects', accounting more fully for a range of pre-personal qualities of feelings that passes through and modulates the capacities of bodies in an encounter (see also Massumi, 2001). The notion of modulation here is important, for if the olive oil tasting did not result in Debra 'thinking about things differently', any affect, notwithstanding her desire or the intention of Mr. Cody, was most probably passive. This would then have been a non-event.

However, it is still not explained how affects come to *be*: that is, what happens to a person on being 'affected' and how decisions are then carried out regarding the paths of aesthetic continuation. The issue here is one regarding judgement. While terms such as 'decision' and 'judgement' appear to resemble certainty and intentionality, it is only partly the case here. Judgement may often be accompanied by some biological and physiological changes, but it is ambiguous if one can readily reduce complex human emotions and motivations to understanding them as just that. Decision-making — while considered to be entirely intentional — displays an intelligence that should be acknowledged as conscious as well as what Brennan (2004:

4) asserts are "intentional unconscious processes capable of being reconnected with conscious ones".

Nothing stands still. Affects embody and "capture[]" (Massumi, 2001: 35) a thoughtful judgement as it simultaneously points towards that which can escape — the unactualised and autonomous potential of something that remains, not unlike pheromones, 'in the air'. Additionally, the judgement that initially brought upon the physiological changes is also the one which performs and acts upon a visceral belief that the evaluative stance that propelled those changes are carried out because they are felt to flow naturally — as 'the right thing to do' — from this same self disposition (also see Anderson, 2005). Finally, to think of judgement as being effected on sovereign bodies is a mere fantasy, wrought for the purpose of speaking of/for the self (Anzieu, 1989; Brennan, 2004). For though one may, in Brennan's term, 'discern' and take steps to nullify or attenuate any unwanted affects that may be an obstacle to one's course or thinking process, such actions are already carried out in the understanding that our feelings and emotions are not ours alone. As Ahmed (2004: 29) says, "what separates us from others also connects us to others". The mind and psyche display and profit from a touching sociality.

Have I deconstructed touch too much, reducing it to individual components that never were? James, an accomplished baker of seventeen years, explains his take on taste: "You do not ask your customers at each step of the way if the pastry tastes ok". Each individual step, in other words, may not represent the final product. Touch is irreducible. We cannot know what we are going to touch just because we have touched before. However it may be said that with greater certainty comes greater mystery. I do not mean to be cryptic for surely the point here has not been to obscure or camouflage the various transmissions of touch but to open up their passages — generously — to allow and understand their taking place. As displayed by various SF members, gaining theoretical and practice knowledge, vocalising their thought processes, and discovering their sensory qualities anew are all part and parcel to appreciating the aesthetics of food. All this in some respect contributes to certainty. Yet the desire to touch also signals a curious willingness to partake of the sensory

knot, the depth that is aesthetics. In this way, that which is becoming — of knowledge, of one's own self — is still unknown, the mystery that still intrigues even with, or even *in spite of*, the various conceptualising of touch. Interrogating touch in this manner takes seriously our biological, physical and psychological contingencies without succumbing to a Neo-Darwinian reductionism. And it does so in tangent with the element of the unexpected: a surprise or, in many cases, an imagination to be fulfilled. It does so by taking into account what it means to live as such.

Touch invokes life.

7.5 Touch encounters, invokes life

The premise of this penultimate section is this: touch awakens aesthetics, and aesthetics invokes life. Born of movement through physiological change, neuro-activity or a universally affective environment, touch is a vehicle of the senses and a mode of transport for the sensate. Through this movement, touch intervenes between the corporeal and the incorporeal and becomes a way of interrogating the movement's practices and relationships with possible other things and peoples. It intervenes, furthermore, in a way that speaks of a desire to ask — of the aesthete, the cook, the potter, the ordinary eater — and correspondingly of any of such people to answer, and sometimes even be made answerable, to their food practices. Thus, it carries within it a means of exposure. This exposure is not merely an appearance of something that had lay hidden beneath. Rather, it is one brought forth via the mode of expression — expressions that have been borne through activities as well as discursive action, the singular and the social, the exterior skin of the body and the interior depth of the mind. Through touch, the aesthetics of SF is a transformative act.

These transformative acts take place at a certain geographic moment. They speak of a definitive event. And they do so via two distinct, but related, opportunities that are afforded them. The first is the concept of 'potential space' as proposed by psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott (1971). Referring to both the psychical and physical space, this concept breaks down the disjuncture between the mental 'in here' and literal 'out there' to refer quite simply to a place which allows the individual the

potential to develop and transform her/himself. While not hermetic, it draws a lineage from Winnicott's studies on infant and childhood development and considers this space as benefiting from having the characteristic of a 'holding and handling environment' (1996 (1965); see also Bingley, 2003). Arguably this concept may be extended through maturation and adulthood: indeed it would seem that the various slow or slow-inflected events provided the very atmosphere of a 'facilitating environment': dynamic situations were tempered with goals pertaining loosely, but most certainly, to a mixture of knowledge, pleasure and conviviality.

Given an understanding of this potential space, the second opportunity involves the ensuing decisions that are made and carried out tacitly or overtly. They reflect more broadly the various states of bodily consciousness. These decisions engage wholly with the aforementioned acts of discernment. Throughout the thesis, one of the key concerns of the SFM — the 'right to defend pleasure' — has progressed unsullied. Rather, it has been the idea of pleasure that has undergone scrutiny and qualification. The situation is no different here. Where aesthetics most keenly creates pleasure such that it is both momentary and persevering is in deflecting that which is unpleasant and correspondingly enhancing that which is pleasurable. Paradoxically, this requires what Brennan (2004) refers to as the 'sealing of the heart'. This is what acts of discernment are: processes of being alert (through surprise as well as habit) to negative moments like fear, anxiety or sadness such that these sensory registers are not allowed to gain a foothold on the individual prior to a cognitive assessment of their affects. 'Sealing the heart' is not as difficult as it may sound. It is a response of a psyche that seeks to maintain its distinct path as it is of an individual seeking to maintain her/his energetic integrity. And as evidenced by the accounts of SF members to follow, these two opportunities were clearly grasped not as discrete entities, but brought to the fore most strongly via encounters — encounters that were made at the initial stages, at the stage of discerning, and finally enmeshed in living philosophically.

7.5.1 Initial Encounters

Initial encounters were often framed as incidents fixed in a moment-in-time, a clarity of when the words 'slow food' were first encountered, or a memorable event early on which cemented a recognition, a desire to be part of the movement or, quite simply, a joyful feeling.

> "I was helping — oh this was such a wonderful day — this couple who have a winery in the Alexander Valley, and each year they invite fifty people from all parts of their lives...and most of us don't know each other and we just show up and all spend the morning picking grapes...Meanwhile we've picked the grapes and we have this fabulous picnic under the trees...and wine in the afternoon and we get to know each other better, and that's when I saw Cindy Lupton and she had a cap on that said 'Slow Food' and I thought: of course, how nice to turn it (the concept) into something to educate people. She just said 'slowfood.com' and I went on the website and I joined."
>
> (Aletha)

> "In Rome, we went somewhere and ate something that was absolutely wonderful. And while we were in this place that made focaccia bread, I started looking at stuff on the walls, and they had a lot of information on SF... and that got me interested."
>
> (Debra)

The accounts did not just depict individual encounters. One oft-mentioned memory, for instance, was a collaborative event put together by the different convivia in California. A theatre in San Leandro was rented to show the film 'Smokestack Lightning' which was about barbequing as an American way of life, and afterwards, members proceeded to a restaurant across the alley to a meal that was based on the recipes in the film. What to me was notable was that although this event was told to me several times, each member emphasised a different aspect of this meeting — a couple commented on meeting members from other convivia, Susan regaled at length that the barbeque theme reminded her of her dad's own backyard do, and Chris spoke about the synergy of the film with a meal that for him 'tie[d] in two different forms of sensory pleasure'. Like a cap, or a wall filled with notices, disparate things create moments of poignancy. Through description, many aspects come together to create this conducive environment: it is not that the SFM is always presented as a holding environment but that in varied places where members have found food-related pleasures, SF had made its presence felt.

7.5.2 Discerning Encounters

Here, I situate the discernment in two rather different arenas. The first — carried out via comparison — details members' popular/idiosyncratic preferences for going to farmer's markets over supermarkets. In the first instance, Dave speaks about the accessibility of the farmer's markets:

> "They're readily available and a viable part of day-to-day-thinking... not like a big event, but natural... like something you do. People go for the community spirit. They don't go there just for the good vegetables, they go there to say 'hello' to someone they know, the relationship with the grower, [and] the mutual appreciation for good quality food. It's all part of the experience."

The mention of 'appreciation', 'natural feeling' and 'community spirit' were voiced by many. Others, like Sandy, a former farmer in South Africa, echoed sentiments which displayed emphatic affection, 'a good feeling' and admiration for those who ply their trade at the markets. For Peter, a cook with close connections to farmers in the Napa Valley, the issue of timing and the sheer opportunity that is afforded SF members, among others, a glimpse into a part of the life of the farmer and her/his produce is no trifle matter:

> "These strawberries, they taste so much better than the store bought ones, they're so good when you buy them from their stand, yet they can't transport, they don't keep well, [and] you have to eat them on the same day. In mass farming, they pick and [they go] straight into the refrigerator truck, [but] every hour that it's out, you lose a day of shelf life, it ruins the taste... I've hung out with the guys who picked the vegetables... sat on the machine that gently washes the lettuce... but I have time for that. SF is for people who don't have that time [but] take one day a month to see that and get that connection. Food does taste better when you have that connection."

To Peter, the sense of timing here is crucial: not everyone has the luxury of continually indulging in the aesthetics of pleasure, but a recurring event like the farmer's market which captures differently each time a distinctly pleasurable food entity can be sought and incorporated well into the SF member's life. It is so because an atmosphere like a farmer's market is a spatial shorthand for what SF stands for. As Nancy comments, her love for farmer's markets is 'just the availability of the food. I just like being in that food atmosphere'.

Conversely, the decision to avoid a supermarket despite its pervasiveness is habitual as it is symbolic. When asked on this subject, only a few chose to speak disparagingly of supermarkets; most exhibited mild annoyance or indifference towards such establishments. In keeping with the characteristic of discernment, many chose not to engage directly with what they perceived as a negative force within the food landscape. Rather than be angry and frustrated about 'the state of the world', it was more helpful to 'do and show good' to others over any of the 'three meals a day' opportunities that were so afforded (Lynn-Eve). In focusing on the meal itself, food is taken out of its supermarket-related context: whether it is because of the 'pseudo-perfection' (Aletha) which makes fruits look almost unreal, the inability to touch or smell the heavily-packaged fresh produce (Wendy), the lack thereof vegetable-derived products that conformed to GMO-free or biodynamic standards (Judy) or, as often mentioned, the conscious decision to opt out of the supermarket system having known its 'process story' (Charles). In short, supermarkets do not have to figure in lives of SF members because they have sought out and prefer alternative ways of conducting their food shopping practices.

The second way of discerning encounters follows a single narrative, albeit one strewn with multiple encounters. It sits squarely in the remit of stories regarding SF producers, and follows the story of Anne — a Navajo-Churro sheep farmer — and her initial quest in obtaining these native sheep that have been incepted into SF's 'Ark of Taste' and endorsed as a SF presidium. Though Anne is framed here as a carer of sheep, her concerns, reactions and thought processes are not unlike those of SF members at large: they speak variously to a will to knowledge, sharp-minded determination, adeptness within changing environments, tactile acumen, and an understanding that often, reality touches us in many unexpected ways.

Anne tells me about researching and deciding on these sheep that were originally from Spain, surviving as one of North America's oldest livestock breed and traded between Spanish colonies and Native Americans in a history 'that you never learnt in school'. Rather than seek out a breed that was 'good at confinement' and commercially successful, she liked the pedigree of these 'almost goat'–like endangered sheep which she felt were 'culturally more interesting', and admired their ability to adapt and thrive in the arid and harsh Four Corners landscape that they were found in. With knowledge from recently acquainted Navajo-Churro owners as well as a forty-year experience drawn from breeding dogs, she armed herself with

the characteristics to look for in a herd of typical sheep: rams with four horns, for instance, or on a closer scale, wool that was not luscious and greasy as the Suffolk breed but wire-y with low water retention properties to suit treating them in arid climates. She remembers a news item regarding a children's farm with rare breed animals being in the McConnell River vicinity, and after running into an old post mistress friend who in turn knew someone who 'knew all the animals around', drove in the vague directions when suddenly she saw them on a hill. She recalls the excitement and exclaiming to her husband Joe 'There they are! There they are! No kidding!', and left a note in the post box of the unattended house detailing her interest and contact details. Some time later, a guy responded saying he wanted to sell the sheep but inexplicably, Anne starts to get nervous and leaves the situation status quo for a while before she tried calling him back, by which time they could not make contact with the owner. She starts to become afraid that 'something was going to happen to the sheep' and drives out there once again. On approaching the house, she remembers a man sitting on the front porch with a lady who, on seeing the car, runs into the house. Even before pulling in, she remembers saying 'Joe, I'm getting these vibes like something terrible has happened... like there's been a death or something...'. On introducing herself, the man affirms that it is indeed 'really a bad time', and that he would call her soon, saying 'I'm getting rid of the sheep. I have to get rid of everything'. Knowing the herd to be relatively inbred, she decides to buy ewes but not rams from him, but retrospectively is wistful about her decision. 'I could kick myself because he saved the best of the flock, [especially] the four-horn rams. They were gorgeous, and they ended up going to auction and that blood line got lost.' She remains up-to-date with the ins and outs of the species by reading and consulting friends of the Navajo-Churro sheep community throughout the USA, and takes an approach which is very hands-on: last Christmas, for example, Joe presented her with a home microscope with which she uses to examine the faeces of the sheep in an attempt to limit what she calls the 'indiscriminate practice of worming and having shots'.

This account is detailed, even ponderous. Yet to the reader, and perhaps even Anne herself, many things are left unexplained. Why was Anne so insistent on this particular breed, and given her keenness, why did she then develop cold feet at the thought of having them, given her vast experience with dogs? Why did she then proceed to change her mind so quickly and fear for the welfare of the sheep? Also, how can her premonition that 'something bad has happened' be explained? The bookends of the account chart familiar territory — of goals, principles and beliefs. Spliced with that however are the things that make these encounters the gritty aesthetics of touch: a biological knowledge of sheep premised on vision and feel; a mental reckoning of Anne's desires as well as what she wishes for the animal; a journey through apprehension; a mixed smell of anxiety and fear; untimely bodies; emotional entities. Quite simply, these are things that happen when one encounters lives.

7.5.3 Encountering Philosophies

To encounter requires that one envelops life. To be touched requires that one embraces its collectivity without contingency. That is not to say that life is carried out carelessly. Rather it is to suggest that life is continually attuning itself. Implicitly and explicitly this has been informing members' personal philosophies in two distinct manners. The first regards one's position and disposition in life, a measure of stillness in the hum of everyday living. The second, by contrast, is a measure of liveliness, the combined movement and force that pushes its way out to be aesthetically, sensually, essentially, living itself.

> "[SF] is a lifestyle, not something that's one-off. I come to find that there's a group promoting the way I want to live, and that's desirable to me. I feel like a little ripple in the pond. When you drop a pebble in still water it goes out, and that can't help but affect everything that radiates out from that"
>
> (Aletha)

> "Aikido is for me very married to the idea of SF because it's... basically a means of harmony, and it's a defensive arts based on the idea of never harming an opponent. You will have opponents, you will have conflicts in your life which do come and present themselves, [but] rather than fighting it [practitioners] teach themselves how to deflect energy that might be harmful or negative away – back at the person or thing instigating it — but in a way that doesn't harm [them]. I think this non-harming aspect is really in keeping with the idea of a community of learning... Understanding that harmony is important [because] if you think of it as a microcosm, it solves a huge problem. It's about understanding where your feet are, where the balance is... I see a parallel [in] understanding where you are in relation to the earth, where you are in relation to your community. The aesthetic of aikido is really connected to my sense of wanting to protect the planet mentally.
>
> (Krista)

Both Aletha and Krista present themselves as materially resilient beings couched in a vernacular philosophy. While one sends ripples through the stillness of the pond as the other attempts to make smooth and fluid the cacophonous conflicts of the world. They are both deeply drawn to acknowledge their encounters in particular ways: singular but significant, harmonious yet effecting. Touch thus enacts place as it does a disposition and attitude. It contains an element of conscience as well as the varieties of consciousness. And as it responds directly to 'art', touch traces a full circle and brings itself back into being. Incepted into the intimate context of the home, art

becomes the means of explicating touch through analogy, extension and limitation. Art becomes the means of explicating itself.

"When I look at art, some of it I really appreciate in my head. There are fewer senses involved, if you will, fewer parts of me involved — it's an intellectual exercise. But it's something I wouldn't want to live with. Then there are other aspects... it becomes more of a whole body experience. Food is the same way — the layers of pleasure and how deep they are, and there's more of the whole body and soul and because of that there's something [there] that I would want to live with. If it's a painting for instance, I would want to have it around me because it evokes feelings of different types of pleasure. Memories of the something, as in food, the seasons, the combinations of flavour, and how sensuous that is..."

(Aletha)

"I've crossed art forms many different times... and I find a very strong relationship between the aesthetic decision-making processes in every art form. As someone who is just experiencing something, you go through a miniaturised version of the creation aspect of art when you are looking at it. You follow certain parts of it and draw a sense of the activity of making it... The complexity of food, or even the complexity of the meal and the time spent through it is similar to the experience when you look at a painting and spend time with [it]. Sometimes you walk away and it stays with you and becomes part of your memory landscape as you do your experiences of certain meals. I think we hold these things in the same place as our memory, as our sense of desire. We look forward to something that resembles them again — we look forward to going to the home of a friend who appreciates art and has art on their walls, we know we are going to see something that we didn't see the last time, or something that we did see the last time. Either way there's that anticipation and with food the opportunity to anticipate it several times a day means we are very experienced... at the level of thinking what we want to eat, when [and] where we want to get it from"

(Cheryl)

Art is analogous to food as food is to art; art is an extension of food as food is an extended art form; art is food and food is art but both draw their limitations at not being able to fully represent the other. All this is not so much circular logic as it is a fluidity, an immersion of body into the art it simultaneously creates. The ways in which Aletha alludes to her multi-sensory experiences and Cheryl her criss-crossing of art forms are demonstrative of how a being participates in the formation of an affective environment. By participating in this way, a presence forged in the stillness of the moment becomes an act, fulfilled as a singular event that includes the practices of habit and aesthetic taste. Here, Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of a 'body without organs' is apt. It refers to a corporeal entity emptied of the essentiality commonly thought to be its organs, and disposes of 'actuality' to become virtual. Yet doing so does not make it a shadow of its former self. Quite the opposite, this disposal releases the body to become more-than-itself. It activates a potential to be

inordinately flexible to various connections, affects, and movements. It opens up to allow forces and intensities to define the corporeal being. The idea of a 'body without organs' is not to dismiss biology but rethink the workings of the body beyond it mere biological conception. It does away with fixed concepts of a human organism reproducing itself in a set manner and focuses more strongly on how a body, a person, exceed that in thought, concept and work. A 'body without organs', in other words, exists because it lives.

This too has been the case with the tangible and/or intangible things mentioned thus far: paintings, memories, meals and pleasure to name but a few. Life is, quite simply, an assemblage of people and things that are alive. The philosophical aim of the SFM and its members, conceived very broadly, is to bring food to life — to *enliven* and *mobilise* sensate food to the living. And it does so by calling for a change, and a persistence in change, towards this life. It has to be not only the SFM that it in name advocates but also that it exceeds to be, in effect, its force.

This second part of encountering philosophies relates specifically to the movement of this force. It suggests that the meeting of people, food, SFM and life is constantly one in a state of flux, albeit practised with a certain philosophical clarity pertaining to the interests of food and life. Valerie, for instance, opines on the confluence of such thinking:

> "My personal philosophy and — because it's also a biological and nutritional perspective — I pretend it's [also] the SF perspective is that [food] that came off the ground, that's the ideal situation. It has the highest nutrition value, and it's as alive for you as it can get. It's as alive as possible. Plants and humans have co-evolved for a long period of time. And plants learnt to keep the things that are good, and those things became appealing to animals [which] ate them. If it smells good, and if it looks good and tastes good, it's good, almost without exception."

Though Valerie's view may be idiosyncratic, her understanding of the entwinement of people and things in an affective environment resonated quite strongly with the views of many other SF members I spoke with. This paradoxical slow urgency towards highlighting the liveliness of things and the momentum of the living were

brought to fore in a variety of activities members engaged in. One of these was on the theme of gardening:

"I think everyone has a different form of expression from anyone else. Gardening is definitely my creative expression, and it's my palate. I see it as a changing dynamic reflection of my mood — like a larger evolution. It's gone from stage to stage... all one colour or all one texture, combinations like that. It's like a tapestry woven with all the seasons and the textures. My life is not distinctively different. It's all variations on a theme. Probably my impetus before was to control it. But I'm learning that that's not how I want to deal with it. My gardening has helped me to relax and take things as they come"

(Becky)

Another of these people is Ann. Her interest in gardening is reflected in her drawings as well as in its physical manifestation. In the excerpt to follow, she speaks of her own garden as well as those of her neighbours' as a 'creative life-force', a term which she repeatedly asserts is her guiding philosophy:

"I'm very interested in aesthetics and colour, shape and design. The place that does it for me is... southern France. I like their colour, I feel very drawn to it... to a *Monet*-type atmosphere. I got a mosaic artist to [build my wall]. I wanted a south-facing garden but this faces north. It was kind of a cold area so I wanted a wall that would essentially capture the sun, which it has done. It's a fabulous garden! I tried to create the feeling of a creative life-force. That when you walk or ride your bike or drive by this house, you can feel the creativity. To me, I can feel it if I go by other houses, I can feel if it's there or not. I can feel where the person is in their creative artistic process. Are they still having square lines, how are they balancing things, what's happening feeling-wise, where they are going. So it's possible that appreciation and interest in food is somewhere on the continuum of one's own artistic process — one's personal artistic process."

The theme of 'life' that holds both Becky and Ann together in their passion towards gardening is resolutely strong, yet the dynamism is their creativity which functions as a force alongside it. Life moves. Perhaps, as Becky mentions, from 'stage to stage', or as a journey that brings together this energy — the sun to the wall in the garden, one house to another, one person to another. From ancient practices of sociality to contemporary grassroots movements, the idea of being-with-others is present. Here it is enmeshed with a SF theme in which members focus on the activities of cooking and eating, returning quite assuredly to the SF convivium scene from which it all began. For as intensely personal as cooking is — members often alluded to their cooking as reflecting their moods or even as 'emotions getting stuck in the food' (Stephanie) — and as exclusive as the act of eating is, the sharing and conviviality

that ensue allows the expression of mundane habits as everyday philosophies. Life affords sensations the aesthetical force that is the SFM.

"I educate myself all the time, I tell people: come a little early, let's cook together. And when you come here, it's going to be a different experience. When they want a glass of red wine, I'll say no, we are going to have a course of wines and drinks and red wine will come about in the middle. You are not going to drink red wine from beginning, middle till end. Let's have some new sensations, let's have some thinking about pairing what you are drinking with what you're eating. It's sometimes a difficult concept for people. Now we joke and I just say: I'm bossy. Because if you've never experienced it, you don't know how good it is."

(Ann)

"[Cheryl and I] are a little sceptical about organisations. There is a sense that foodism can become really precious, really fussy and snobbish. Fortunately, that's not been an issue. It's not that we lack opportunity to get together to have dinner with people here or at people's houses. The bay area is just thick with people who are into food and wine and enjoy it in a very open and honest way, and like to get together and share that. We're not real joiners; we tend to be people who initiate things. SF for me was a way of life in general. The goals seemed good."

(Mark)

"It's helpful to talk about an international movement as it does give extra weight. The fact that there are things like these being organised around international activities that are not just some weird ideas of mine, and they are drawing more and more attention. [I'm repeating] an event I put on last year for my friends, essentially a wilderness cookout at an archaeological site. It used to be a sheep camp in high sierra that was run by Basque Americans who built these outdoor ovens and one of these ovens have now been restored. I did it last year because I felt the urge."

(Cheryl)

"Food is something we eat at least — probably, hopefully — three times a day, and it's such a sensual pleasure that why partake in any experience that isn't wonderful. When we eat, so much of it is about relating to another person... SF had sent the convivium leaders a little box of pixie tangerines that were so delicious, so we called a farmer in southern California and about four of us in the convivium went in on a thirty-pound box. We divided them and I had this massive bowl and I'm wondering: How am I going to eat all these. So I brought a bag to work and handed it out to people saying: You gotta try this. And my manager was: Oh, that's so cute. I'll have one with my lunch. I mean, everyone here knows Lynn-Eve is espousing SF all the time right. And I get an email from him after lunch where he typed in really big letters: OMG! That was the most amazing tangerine! And to hear from him about how the sensation was, and to relate it back to me, that was completely gratifying. That's what wonderful about food, that you are sharing that experience."

(Lynn-Eve)

The life of the SFM exists because of its aesthetics. This statement is a simple assertion, but its message holds the potential to profoundly affect the SFM as it does the lives SF touches. There is a keen adherence towards sensations, and a passion

towards the inclusion of others — food entities as well as people — into the experience of these sensations. While the excerpts have members recounting their favourite moments of introducing SF to their family and friends, the self-congratulatory tone is muted. In the subtle difficulties and/or differences that are mentioned, there is a sense that people, things and assemblages have the radical ability to move and become the force of the SFM that they attribute their allegiance to. For Mark and Cheryl, it appears to allow them to focus in on what they are already doing and in name 'lend weight' to what they hope to further achieve. For Ann, self-education goes hand in hand with sharing that experience with others and activating new sensations regarding food and wine pairings over novel meal arrangements. For Lynn-Eve, the 'always espousing' of new food and varieties can sometimes bring into the static setting of an office lunch a jolt of excitement and reap unexpected rewards. All in all, the aesthetic experience cannot be made to conform to any ready explanation or perception. One feels it in the air, in the food and in others, and its touch is nuanced and complex. Finally, to have an aesthetic experience is not to expect or signify, but to be open and disposed towards. Roger, an aforementioned SF member, believes this is achieved by thinking and 'practising out of the matrix'. Here, Roger's understanding of life as a matrix parallels quite succinctly critical accounts of cultural significations that appear bounded and precoded by an ideological master structure. In echoing a similar, rhetorical imploration that Massumi (2001) poses, namely — 'How can the grid itself change?' — an answer that SF provides is in conjoining transmission/movement with matter in new relations and engagements. This ensures that the grid and the matrix is but one way of conceiving of life, for their static dispositions have been given too much focus in contemporary thought and practice. For members, the grid expresses a philosophical lesson as it simultaneously provides a caution towards any complacency within the SFM. Rather, to be the essential and veracious force of the SFM requires a desire — to be creative and create anew, with touches and sensations, affects and food, gravitas and laughter, food and people.

That is, I would argue, the bare simplicity of the SFM.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 A reply to the geographer...

Two concerns which I felt were pertinent to any geographer were raised in the introductory chapter of the thesis: they spoke of the important and resonating quality of space, as well as the revolution of taste as a resonating quality of scale. Two replies are provided here. If anything, they urge a continual interrogation of the spatial and scalar qualities that matter in our contemporary world. The first is that, within the SFM, physical and metaphorical notions of space are afforded many points of contact and confluence. For example, 'geographies of home' present unique historical and political junctures that extend from the headquarters of the SFM in Bra, Italy to the Apricot growers in Igdir, Turkey; they support an approach to place which facilitated the conduct of interview and ethnographic communication; and they expand the ideas of what constitutes home from the body, to that of an/other and to the world. Geographies of physicality, sociability and sensuality have been shown to be influential in creating various food landscapes. Their potential spaces and facilitating environments cannot be underestimated. The second reply is that the journeying of this thesis has also carried with it the journeying of a specific slow identity: the 'pleasure of taste' that was posited in the introduction is always a taste-in-action, a constantly productive knowledge, sensation and expression of palatable bodies. A simple quest that started with 'taste' has produced a 'delicious revolution' that has produced a SF-infused landscape that is arguably more democratic, equitable, ethical and aesthetic. Taste brings together consumers and producers and, in effect, folds together the four themes of the thesis —commodity, time, ethics and aesthetics — to inform on the affectivity of space across different scalar moments.

8.2 Alternative Consumption: Politics and Ethics

The practices of the SFM are most closely aligned to what in academia is referred to as alternative (food) consumption. The question of what indeed it is alternative to is a

valid one, and the distinction is sometimes unhelpful (Harris, 2010). Nonetheless, there are some features that one may be able to draw upon to make this claim.

Firstly, it is an alternative to the conventional means by which consumption takes place. A common refrain here is that conventional food systems *disconnect*: markets are global but placeless, production and supply chains are long but opaque, and there are non-existent relations between producers and consumers. Beyond its capitalist agenda, there is a lack of attention to social, ecological and environmental concerns.

By contrast, alternative consumption is enacted within *networks* (Morgan & Murdoch, 2000; Murdoch, 2000), where the information strung out through its actors, institutions and entities is sought to expose (Harvey, 1996; Cook et al, 2004) as well as emplace (Cook & Crang, 1996) various ecologies, environments and labours that have been obfuscated in a conventional food equation. Such practices often have the effect – and result - of shortening food/supply chains (Collet & Mormont, 2003; Renting et al, 2003; Ilbery & Maye, 2005; Feagan, 2007).

Most of all, however, alternative consumption is often considered within a 'quality turn' (Marsden & Acre, 1995; Goodman, 2003; Winter, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Watts et al, 2005). Theories regarding modes of convention (Boltanski & Thevenot, 1991; Murdoch et al, 2000; Murdoch & Miele, 2004) or singularisation of products (Callon et al, 2002) have been used to explicate this 'quality' character of alternative consumption. What networks have done, then, is allow for a closer examination of the norms (conventions) and uniqueness (singularisation) that surround alternative consumption practices and their respective entities.

This quality turn has brought a focus of attention on the food artisan plying his/her own trade, as well as on the bioprocesses that may have brought about this quality (Renting et al, 2003). The implicit assumption here is that alternative consumption relates food, in some way, to an improved standard as compared to conventional produce. Alternative food, in other words, is quality. And so are the bioprocesses that it is often associated with: organic, non genetically-modified, healthier, safer,

and more natural. Indeed, foods possessing these bioprocesses are often emphatically branded as quality produce (Ilbery & Kneafsey, 2000).

The rise of alternative consumption appears to mirror a rise in self-reflexive action. In particular, emphasis on the ethical, the political and the consumer has consciously elevated the profile of alternative consumption.

One of the main things that allows alternative consumption to demonstrate its ethical character is that along its networks, it can be embedded with information (Raynolds, 2002; Renting et al, 2003). Producer, cooperative, institution and entity information alike can be showed, displayed or told. This is particular evident in fair trade schemes and products, where value-laden information reaches the customer printed on the packaging and/or communicated at the point of retail. This is an ethics that is not based on distance but on the information that is at hand. Other factors that have been observed to demonstrate this ethics include the re-incorporation of nature into the food chain (Marsden, 2000), the redistribution of value along the network, and the reconvened trust from new relations forged between producers and consumers (Whatmore et al, 2003).

What makes alternative consumption a strong ally for politics is that ideologically, advocates of alternative food initiatives support new forms of activism forged on the landscape of food. In attempts to achieve environmental sustainability, social justice and economic viability, alternative consumption is seem to embody oppositional and/or counter-hegemonic strategies aimed at the structure and powers that coordinate and globalise the dominant food system (Allen et al, 2003; see also, Williams, 1976b). Whether it is performed in supporting a farmers market or boycotting a big chain supermarket, these consumption practices coalesce at places that hitherto may not have been recognised for their political efficacies. In this sense, alternative consumption also leads to new forms of political associations and governance (Marsden & Arce, 1995; Marsden, 2000, Whatmore et al, 2003).

The alternative consumer, if he/she may be called that, is posited to differ markedly from the ordinary consumer. The figure of the consumer here is not as the paragon of

the food/supply chain, or a customer faced with unfettered consumer choice. Instead, they are agents (Goodman, D. 2004, Fonte, 2008) actively involved in the construction of an alternative food project. Even if not immediately reflexive, opportunities exist for any politics and ethics of the alternative food project to be made known to them. They may also be called "citizen consumers" (Lockie, 2009; Mansvelt, 2008). This is not because they are made to self-regulate their consumption behaviour as citizens of a state, but rather choose to partake as citizens of the new relations and governance forged on this alternative food landscape. They are, in other words, embedded in the social relations they find themselves in (Clarke, 2008).

8.2.1 SF enacting alternative consumption

The rise of the SFM is, directly or indirectly, indebted to the theorisations and practices of alternative consumption. As an organization, it is what Bowker and Star (1999) term a "boundary object", supple and robust enough to gather to it diverse investments, holding them in conversation without imposing a singular order or design. It aligns itself, in other words, with forms of alternative consumption without being just that, opting to pick and choose from a range of causes and effects.

In the protest story of Carlo Petrini and its manifesto are found the hallmarks of direct opposition, a call to arms against industrial fast time/food. This form of opposition, however, does not go much further as SF chooses instead to perform a role worthy of good social movements: to articulate the problem, identify the causes, suggest solutions, and issue calls to actions that will 'save the flavours' of the world.

Using the metaphor of a platform, it sees itself as a connecting point between various consumers and producers. On this platform there are, following Boltanski (1999), spokespersons and spectators: members, journalists, friends and strangers. As an international grassroots organization, its strength lies in its networks. And just as the processes and products of alternative food networks are embedded with information, so too the SFM has to find ways to disseminate its aims and goals.

The narrative is important. Building on its historical ties with the popular media, it utilises well the popular media means of the radio and newspapers, and in pamphlets and in-house magazine publications, transferring its communication skills also to the more technologically-advanced SF website. The *gola* part of SF's previous incarnation as an agricultural association *Arcigola* refers to the throat through which food passes, as well as that through which spills out the voice. The narrative needs a voice.

The artisan is a revered figure within the movement, taking the form of, for instance, a producer in Turkey who is supported by the Ark and Presidia projects. It is also the jam maker who plies her trade at the farmers market in San Francisco and the cooks who subscribes to purchasing food that has been grown in a sustainable manner. There is recognition of members' effort both near and far. Through the interviews that were conducted for this project, it was also clear that members themselves displayed a concern for those near to them as well as those further away, extending not infrequently to speak about 'this larger world' that we live in.

As with notions of alternative consumption, a critique can be passed of some of SF's shortcomings, a part of which may be endemic to the fieldwork selection and methodologies used for the thesis. Circumstances that led to my choice of field sites proved serendipitous, as most of them were considered privileged sites of (alternative) consumption, with bountiful opportunities for a range of activities to take place. In conversations, interviewees were cognizant of this and sometimes displayed what I felt was an unfair bias towards other places which had not achieved as much, such as the oft referred to 'red centre' of the USA.

However, as it was also pointed out by other respondents, it was not fair to compare 'apples with oranges' when, for instance, the climate and terrain of another city or state did not allow for such agricultural fecundity. Sometimes, there were also compounding factors relating to the uneven development of these regions and the socio-economic status of the population that made it hard for them to access, and consume such produce.

Yet even in the state of California where I conducted a majority of my interviews, there was a notable silence of voices that belonged to the Latino immigrant labour on which this agriculture state is reliant. This, it could be said, is evidence that even reintroducing or reintegrating relations between producers and consumers can be a highly selective process, with a fetishizing of certain types of consumption reproducing the distance between food consumers and marginalised food producers (Gouveia & Juska, 2002). Who were the others being missed out here? Where were the voices of the disadvantaged that could be found even within privileged areas? If the SFM's call to 'good, clean and fair' produce was a universal aim, was its narrative matching its proposed actions?

Other factors that have been raised in the literature also give pause for thought. In her paper on sustainable agriculture, Trauger (2009) illustrates how it may be that doing agriculture in a sustainable manner is not emancipatory for all actors in the network. What are the measures that SF might aim for to ensure that their two goals of sustainability and emancipation may align themselves with each other? For instance, it was found that increased awareness of quality, health or food scares did not necessarily make for a more democratic and just food landscape (Gouveia & Juska, 2002). Also, as Paxson (2006) reminds us regarding what she calls 'economies of sentiment', there is no guarantee that sentiment, affiliation or politics would be enough to sustain a suitable farm production site (artisan cheese, in this case) if the economics and finances did not make it possible. "Economics' she says 'precedes place" (ibid, 2006: 210).

8.2.2 Findings

For the SFM, there is an entwinement between its ethical and political projects, but the means by which this relationship is carried out, and the results that it wrights vary. For this thesis, the findings are as follows:

From its origins in Italy, the SFM was built on an overall healthy food landscape where socio-economic disparities did not impeach on a resolutely regional/localised food cuisine and appetite, nor an ability to consume it as such. As its political

structures moved from regionalism to factionist, the various political parties took on – and imparted – a range of everyday political life and practices. In Northern Italy, the *associazionismo* (associations) and PCI (Italian Communist Party) overlapped in both its political and non-political functions. Later, the separation of Politics from cultural politics appeared to strengthen the insinuation of ideology around thematic issues, rather than along traditional left/right alignments. The strong civic consciousness produced a citizenry that could be mobilised to support a movement that was, at that time, based on the hedonistic pleasures of food and wine. Outside Italy, the various political formations and transformations have an appeal to members who hold different understandings and interpretations of SF's political (and cultural) history. It can be argued that the idea of a 'political semblance' is one of the more persuasive powers at work here.

Time is an important consideration of the SFM – indeed slow time is – and attention afforded by slow time gives one the opportunity to pause and consider normalised food habits and practices. However, time does not always have to be thought of in terms of speed. Time considered as non-linear or static may be tweaked in alternative modes of consumption to perform new relations (Collet & Mormont, 2003). Practising the non-linearity of time may also allow one to work in the zone of indetermination and attend to its radical possibilities. Consumption of time here includes history and tradition, but goes beyond that to re-create or create anew. Consumption of time premised on the accessibility of memory or recall may be dependent on the past, and may in turn determine what happens in the future, but consumption is of the present moment, giving rise to the efficacy of the present. Time, furthermore, is enveloping. In time, sustainability can take place when one considers – as SF does – agriculture as a holistic system. Sustainability per unit time/space is not leaky. Factors that either aid or threaten sustainability considered as such go some way in affecting the democracy of time.

For some commentators, the ethical dimension of the SFM appears to be rising with another tide. That is, much as it has been argued that it is a neoliberal political climate that has allowed industrial/conventional agriculture a dominant hold, there

is a growing concern that neoliberalism is now also taking a foothold in the alternative food economy (Roff, 2007; Guthman, 2008; Harris, 2010), signalling an increased consumerist ethic based on freedom of choice, as well as a devolvement of consumer responsibility to that same individual. On the other hand, the individual can also be the community that performs the collective (Nancy, 1991). The rise of the aforementioned 'citizen consumer' furthermore is one with ethical decisions seemingly placed at their feet but who, in reality, acts according to "a diversity of strategies and issues adopted and...a variability of scales (that can be) understood as a set of practices which mobilise a diverse range of motivations, incentives and desires" (Barnett et al, 2005: 27). There is, I believe, such a thing as individualised collective action (Michelleti, 2003) in the consumer/social movement hybrid that is the SFM.

The advantages of a SF ethics as compared with other alternative food provision schemes (organic, fairtrade etc) is that this ordinary, everyday ethics may take on a far more varied form than any of the other schemes put together, is difficult to be divorced from self-disposition, and may (possibly) be enacted three meals a day. It is further suggested that Foucault's (1994) *rapport à soi* (ethics of self) may be too stern an approach for the SFM, with its origins in pleasure. Rather, like being able to 'seal the heart' (Brennan, 2004) to bad effects, the politics and ethics of life involves "an art of the self (to) cultivate the capacity for critical responsiveness in a world in which the politics of becoming periodically poses surprises to the self-identifications of established constituencies" (Connolly, 1999: 146). Everyday ethics is pervasive, but not encompassing, determined also by whose ethics it is, where and in what context (Mansvelt, 2005). Finally, a SF ethic is a relational one (Whatmore, 1997; Goodman, 2004), based on the networked relations of consumers, producers, commodities and (productive) nature.

An ethical and political geography of (alternative) consumption requires an understanding of its geography of materiality. Firstly, the presence and intransigence of the material has to be present for consumption – physical, ideological, symbolic – to take place. As part of a relational ethic, the material is also social. In the way we

may relate to certain food entities as being 'slow', what could be recognised as a SF product arises out of the characteristics embodied within – colour, freshness, as well as the lack of other add-ons (such as plane tickets) – meeting another. This means that though one may hazard to try and define a SF product, the exercise is ultimately futile. Like art that needs an object, but not a specific one, the SF material only emerges as an assemblage and/or event. Perhaps only a continually active qualification may rest and sustain any character that holds such an entity tightly with the SFM.

Finally, an ethics and politics is also present to the neglected components of sense and knowledge. More than just scientific, lay or profane knowledge (Fonte, 2008), knowledge is also that which can be re-cognised by the senses. The attendance here, furthermore, to our pre-cognitive abilities, as well as what I have referred to as the democratic sense of touch, are part of the sensorium which 'distributes the sensible' (Rancière, 2004). This not only unveils any commodity fetish but speaks directly to our experiences and negotiations of a SF-oriented life.

8.3 Resonating Quality of Space and Scale

The politics and ethics of SF depend on the resonating quality of space and scale. More than simply a measure of size they are often equated to, scale may also be conceived as level and relation (Howitt, 1998; 2002). Using the example of a musical scale, Howitt (1998) shows how the note may be part of several scales at the same time. It is, however, still recognised by its name and/or tonal quality: it has an agreed-upon identity. It may be played at different octaves: different levels may share characteristics of their constituent parts. It may be played both loudly and softly: size as intensity. From this characterisation, it can be argued that scale is – in other words – space (see Mamadouh et al, 2004). The politics of scale (Smith, 1994) depends on its ability to jump, stretch or nestle within boundaries. This is simultaneously a politics of space. These boundaries, however, are not static or pre-determined. They emerge, much like the scales they enact.

Scale can also be enacted through networks. In their study on the consumption of 'foreign' foods in London, Cook and Crang (1996) found that consumer identities of themselves and what they were eating splintered into 'identifications' that stretched beyond their present place and subjective boundaries. While the consuming took place in a local context, the food that was being eaten was 'displaced' by virtue of being "opened up by and constituted through and by connection into any number of networks" (1996: 138). Networks, however, are not equal: scale may be able to compound or "obscure differentiated power relations between key actors and contestations in network meaning and practices" (Raynolds, 2002: 408).

To resonate necessitates an encounter, and it is in an encounter that relations are formed. The resonating quality of the SFM, hence, is in the relations, and the connections forged by stories, objects, tastes, processes and people via what I have called the physical, metaphorical and psychological 'touch' of the organization. Touch is the 'immutable mobile' (Latour, 1990) that passes through the scalar dimensions of SF.

For a grassroots organization, the adherence of the scale of the 'local' to alternative food networks is of particular interest to SF. The contemporary movement towards the localisation, or re-localisation of food is not merely to put name to a process. Rather, it speaks directly of a strategy. Which spaces and scales are to be included in this process, which are excluded (or extruded), and what are the reasons underpinning this? The making of scale is the organization of space for purposes of enacting geographical differentiation (Smith, 2000). They are relational orderings (Moore, 2008). This however is also a hybrid and tangled process that is subject to much negotiation and qualification.

As mentioned, the 'local' is an example of a scalar quality. Understanding the 'local' dovetails nicely with discussion on localisation and re-localisation strategies that have emerged within discussions of alternative food/consumption.

Firstly, there is a marked difference in localisation strategies between North America and Europe (Goodman, 2003; Fonte, 2008). North America's strategy is considered a

political agenda opposing industrial food, centring on an alternate food economy based on social justice and environmental sustainability, while Europe's is more reformist in nature, incorporating rural farms and marginal agriculture economies. More specifically, it has also been found that countries such as the United Kingdom attempt what is known as a reconnection strategy following the food scares in Britain, while countries such as Italy opt more for an 'origin-of food' perspective to strengthen their food/brand recognition. For instance, and following the French wine appellation system to denote terroir, the labels such as that of Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) are used in Italy to indicate food that is typical of a region. Implicitly, the connotation is that the typical product that is of its place of origin will demonstrate a high degree of excellence.

Secondly, like the quality turn in alternative food networks to which it is closely aligned, the localisation or re-localisation of food embodies a number of characteristics:

It is considered, in first instance, as a result of a community taking charge of their food choices, with a positive connotation that the local food economy can sustain the partaking of these choices. As with the 'quality turn', there have been some conflations of character and meaning that have come to rest with 'local' food. For example, there is a perception that local denotes food that is fresh and unprocessed, and therefore healthier food (Little et al, 2009). There are also ideas that 'local' is more 'traditional', and that being the place of origin or place of purchase gives the food produce some notion of authenticity and provenance (Hughes & Reimer, 2004; Jackson et al, 2006). There is an assumption, as was found in the case study on the Minneapolis Farmers Market, that local food and consumption is best (Slocum, 2008).

The local may also be framed as resistance to global forces, as demarcation and the closing off of certain boundaries, and depending on "regional provisioning through a selective and voluntary regional closure that links production and consumption around particular sites, through concepts such as the 'foodshed'" (Kloppenburg et al, 1996, in Allen et al, 2003: 63). It speaks of an attempt to re-valourize local resources and identities for purpose of overcoming structural and/or economic barriers in what

Winter (2003a) terms 'defensive localism'. Often, such a stance is underpinned by embodied and discursive ideologies regarding a food climate yoked with a neoliberal environment and politics, and may be based on an avowal to reject supermarkets and fast food as it is about endorsing local produce (Little et al, 2009).

Lastly, making sense of all this requires a nuanced understanding of the efficacies and complexities of scale (and space). It would be helpful to understand that space, and place are not diametrically opposed but rather co-constitutive of each other (Cresswell, 2004; Harris, 2010). Also, even if place could be defined as that which has "the specificity of location, particular material forms, associated meanings, and values" (Hinrichs, 2007: 11), it would aneed to consider a geographer's understanding of the openness and porosity of place (Massey, 1994) coupled with its performance to sustain its definitional character.

8.3.1 Resonating quality in SF

The resonating quality in SF is born of a politics both *of* place, as well as a politics *in* place. That is, SF tries to use to its advantage the strategies that are associated with notions of place, coupled with the understanding of its situated quality in both discursive and material space.

The strategy of labelling local products is seen as a way of entraining capital, as " a label of origin connects it with a specific place, and opens the possibility that producers, as well as consumers, can be held accountable for their actions *in that place*" (Barham, 2003: 130, original emphasis). For now, the SFM is not convinced on the labelling of a 'slow food product' per se even though doing so might allow a locally designated entity to "rely on spatially extensive food supply chains in order for them to be economically viable" (Watts et al, 2005: 30). The production of labels, while denoting locality, may also not be the best thing as it may mean that local foods are not being absorbed into their regions of production (Barham, 2003; Tregear, 2003). Witnessing the travels of the much-lauded Cheddar Cheese from its home in Somerset, UK to the bi-annual cheese festival in Bra, Italy and to specialist cheese shops in Seattle, USA begs the question of whether this is scenario of insufficient

local support or more conventionally the marketing of a niche food product in a way that subverts some of SF's teachings.

There is a sense that as concerns about the co-option of organic agriculture by conventional food chains grow (see for example, Guthman, 2003), the localisation of food signals a new post-organic movement focused on getting 'ready at hand' local and chemical-free food directly to the consumer (Fonte, 2008). In speaking to interviewees, it was obvious that many had a slightly ambiguous take on organic agriculture purely for its own sake, citing as Fonte (2008) suggests a favouring of the more proximal local produce. There were also concerns about organic agriculture that did not conform to sustainable standards or environmental protocol. Producers also favoured selling locally as organic certification was expensive and sometimes involved techniques that they did not necessarily agree with. For the consumer, certification was only necessary in the absence of the producer. Face-to-face communication was important to them, as was their ability then to converse or show reciprocity towards these producers.

In lieu of full support for the EU-sanctioned PGI and PDO labels, SF's practices and philosophy are guided more by the trinity concepts of tradition, terroir and typicality. In descending order, they hold in esteem the weight of time and culture. In ascending order, they accommodate changes to (original) land use while attempting to maintain sensitivity towards place distinctions. These simple concepts, it is suggested, belie a flexibility in their criteria that is both open and defining. For one, the localisation of food strategy has renewed legitimation of artisan food practices and regional cuisines (Goodman, 2003), allowing for the resurgence, re-creation or creating anew of cultural practices and self-identities. These concepts lend weight to SF policies and programs and their appropriate support for this resurgence. Indeed, it is more generous, and accurate to consider supporting typical products not because they are defensive strategies or invented traditions (Gaytán, 2004) but for how they may represent "a mixture of tradition and innovation, physicality and symbolism, mechanization and craftsmanship, endogeneity and exogeneity, myths

and realities...(and) the processes by which different mixes of properties emerge in different contexts" (Tregear, 2003: 104).

While the conceptual partnership of the localisation of food with small-scale production techniques may be a gross generalisation, it did make me recall three producers who worked as such: Barbara, who had only one goat-milking machine for her herd of goats; June, who alone stirred and bottled all her jams; and Robert who started off making artisan chocolate with an old, second hand machine. I realised later that what I had remembered was only coincident to the stories told to me. Rather, what struck me were them recounting their earnest attempts to produce as best they could with what they could afford, suiting not just their financial circumstance but also according to social, ethical and aesthetic considerations. That I later found that they were well-regarded in their communities and valued for their produce as for their work speaks, I think, to what Deleuze and Guattari (1999 (1987)) call 'intensities' in resonating other qualities of space and scale.

It is important, however, to guard against resonating qualities that may, wittingly or unwittingly, reify or essentialise prejudices, bias or attitudes borne of a lack of reflexivity. These relate, for instance, to the imposition of 'western standards', what Bryant and Goodman (2004) refer to as the 'benign altruism' in which alternative or radical consumption practices do little more than reinforce the North/South divide of unequal consumptive means, or how rhetoric and fair trade practices do little more than dispose of colonial legacies by burying it in respectful trade relations among equal partners (Varul, 2008). SF should consider that standards and criteria set for a slow commodity type will be supple enough to be applicable across different contexts, and that any normative valuing of commodities takes into account for whose good it is that the entity or produce is valued as they are (Castree, 2003b).

8.3.2 Findings

In this thesis, the emerging space and scale resonates the SFM in the two following ways: firstly, as a socio-material assemblage, and secondly, as body embodying forms of subjectivity.

The socio-material assemblage is formed, paradoxically, on the intransigence of the geography and social life of material entities. It is an assemblage as no individual person or thing – no discrete entity, in other words - can be fully credited for advancing the aims and goals of the movement at any one particular moment. Yet following a named item and letting it reveal or emphasise, for instance, "different traces of production that linger in the experience of consumption" (Cook, 2004) allows an examination of the assemblage's reverberating effects, and the interactions with any other entities that travel with it.

Travelling as a commodity, the assemblage takes in space as it takes in time. The assemblage, in other words, spatialises, and resonates time. It make time/space matter beyond history and/or tradition (themselves assemblages), readily accepting into its fold the "emerging collectivities" (Tay, 2009: 505) such as that of terroir and typicality. It is furthermore, both an ordering and a positioning. Lury (1999), for instance, speaks evocatively about how a concept, in this case a clothing 'brand' may be elevated by what she calls the 3-dness of matter as it attaches itself to the body which does the work of moving, making mobile, visible and tangible, the brand concept. One may similarly consider how the concept of quality, or of alterity in consumption, may have the work done for it by an assemblage – in colour, taste or as a sentiment – provoked into performing its particular scale/space and time.

And what is the role of the SF body? It has been found, in a fair trade case study example, that successful organizations approached people as socially and geographically situated beings (Clarke et al, 2007) with sophisticated moral reasoning and their roles and responsibilities in regards to the issues. Geographical beings of the world, in the city, of an individualised place, they are grounded as they are able to stretch themselves across space, across scales and enact what Campbell (1998) terms 'moral cartographies'. They exist in place, while simultaneously positioning themselves to reflect a 'cosmopolitan localism' (McMichael 2000). Modern reflexivity, furthermore, enables the marshalling of the self with another across a range of scales, or more accurately, care assemblages. And yet, while ideas of scale – bodily, self, other, community and world – are explicitly referred to here,

these bodies are troubled by these very categories in which they make self and/or place identifications, and in which they are considered to possess (accurately or not) characteristics against which an 'other' can be compared. They are, after all, mobile bodies. And they are leaky.

In fact, as Hayes-Conroy and Martin (2010) remind us, these mobile, leaky beings are also the visceral bodies of the SFM. They are what they term 'minded bodies'. How does it feel to know something? What forms of knowledge does the visceral carry, to anticipate, to desire, to have differing responses, but also to partake of intellectual knowledge, from conversations, discussions, reading, debating and an ability to perceive and conceptualise it as such?

The body is as emergent as the scale, space and place that it enacts. It moves with and for knowledge and the senses. Scale, after all, is a process, and the making of an entity, or a subjectivity is always a becoming, a process and a production (Probyn, 2003). In an 'ethic of existence', the permeating, resonating quality of ethics is forged on connections; consumption is carried out on grounds of this connectivity and on the intensities of attachments (McCormick, 2003). In this way the body performs like one without organs (Deleuze & Guattari, 1999 (1987)), engaged only in metabolic relations (Whatmore, 2002), as forms of subjectivity that are affective as they affect. As bodies that resonate as they move.

8.4 Evaluating a Modern world

Inevitably perhaps, this study of the SFM has also been a study of modernity, of life in a modern world. Time as commodity, commodity as monetary values, transcendent moralities, and discrete bodies: these concepts bear the hallmarks of this epoch. Chapter Four marked the appearance and rise of the commodity form. Chapter Five chartered the domination of speed and the sequestering, and the harnessing of the 'self' subject. Chapter Six went to the heart of a modern moral philosophy. Chapter Seven cemented the idea of modernity's violence inasmuch as it showed that not only technology, or the market, but also human volition demanded the splitting up of the senses and a commodification of their perceptible qualities.

The appearance of these issues has gone some way towards spelling out societal concerns, contemporary thoughts, and pivotal understandings that individuals and societies, things and commodities are deemed to be entrenched in. Focusing on the flux of modern life has also meant focusing on the detritus of modernity: loss of time, the lost commodity and the lost promise that only art, in its last instance, can represent.

Yet this study has also focussed on providing a critique to modernity posed as such. It has done so not in a way that imagines a clean break from modernity. Rather, it has juxtaposed an account of the SFM with various extant and relevant themes of modernity. Concepts such as 'systems of formation' and 'regimes of value' attend to the structuring of power as these categories themselves are rendered towards understanding the fluidity of, and between, possible categories. In Chapter Two, history, geography and political ideology were considered not as separate entities but as tightly woven, unique events that at various moments brought together a community formation of food and people. In Chapter Three, the categorical division of methods and methodology was brought into question. The refutation of this division was shown to be a justification of how I carried out my research. As well, the privileging of depth in the field versus that of moment-to-moment was found to be unsubstantiated in that both were not exclusive categories to conducting research. The tension that seemingly arose in this chapter between saying and doing came to have resonance throughout the thesis, and was partially resolved when it was argued that the said was also the performed, and that the performing thereof fulfilled aspects of communicability and inter-action. Chapters Four and Seven stepped into a world of senses that was perceived as divided, either through the force of separation of labour and commodity, or by theoretical suppositions of art and aesthetics that insisted that they be viewed with such analytic lenses. Much of the discussion of these chapters was thus spent in unpicking these normative attitudes to produce accounts of sensory interrelatedness. In Chapter Five, the categories of time — as past, present and future — were reworked such that a recalling of them could only be made in simultaneous and/or contemporaneous time. Again in Chapter Six, ideas of the self and other otherwise held separate, and ethical subjects self-fashioned

according to universal strictures of good and bad were displaced by categories of virtue seen as informing a dynamic and continuous aspiration towards a good life.

In this thesis, understanding the contemporary life of the SFM has demanded new understandings of modernity and society at large. As I have shown, qualified understandings of modernity can greatly texture and lend credence to the making sense of a prescient and presently occurring slow life. It is to the theorisation of this slow flow of life, modulated by absences, presence and excesses, that the discussion now turns.

8.5 Evaluating a Lively world

Life is motioned towards an attention to its quality of liveliness — whether in the passing of time, the commodity form, the conduct of ethics or the aesthetic sensations — a vital force that propels the SFM as much as the modernity that has been so depicted. This quality is substantive, processual and always in the process of becoming something-else: a quality of more-than-itself. This thesis started with a quote from Carlo Petrini that I paraphrase here: that as we are all going to the same place, we might as well go there slowly. In spite of its dry wit, connoting the ubiquity of death, this statement is not teleological. Rather, more than anything else, the SFM regards the 'going there' as of paramount interest and importance. 'Going there' is an ontology.

What makes this life vital comes — and will continue to come — from people, food and things. They will be moved by effects and affects, rather than as pre-determined entities, or as members of subscribed categories. They will be qualified as much by their senses as their common-senses; by pre/personal volition as by their community; by their historical commitment as by their potentiality. This thesis has concentrated on four aspects which speak to this vitality. It related in the first place to not only the liveliness of matter, but its quality of slowness. Space without matter is mere symbolic space: a difference in degree, an illusion, a veil. Lively matter sits stubbornly with time. It is the referential in duration. The second aspect brought life to the commodity. It was shown that the slow commodity's position within systems

of production, consumption and value does not make slow 'food' staid. Instead, the journey that it often undertakes through social relations enlivens and fulfils it. It holds steady against the paradoxical critique that Marx levelled at the commodity form. Ethics, the third consideration, was guided by a focus on *eudaimonia* — a good life that is well-lived. The dynamic movement of a becoming self and/or other served as purpose towards an expanded notion of these categories. At the same time, confirmation of the boundaries of self and other allowed a 'performing towards', a lively investment of the self towards the other without a necessary reciprocity. The fourth and final consideration dealt directly with the sensate qualities of life. It was one that took to heart the creativity resulting from an ongoing conversation between art and a sensible aesthetics.

Slow food demonstrates that life garners its vitality along several routes. A measure of this vitality, it has been argued, has at its starting point an understanding of perception as a combination of sensation, affect and experience. While it may have seemed, at first glance, that the original protest at the *Piazza di Spagna* was a protectionist measure for Italian food culture, it has emerged that this event was greatly significant. Similarly, while it initially seemed that the SFM was set up as a reactionary counter-act to fast food, the movement has proved to be in excess of any single act or intention. Perception here is an attention to veracity. In the image-matter, it is the in-between of a face and thing that forces action, and unto that action, a reaction. In art, it is the essential call to the senses, a distribution within a sensorium. This perception of image-matter, as of art, is also a recollection. Memory, then, is a contraction of life. It is a constant presence, restructuring its sensations and objects of knowledge. Recall Seremetakis (1994: 9): the mnemonic is always intertwined with the sensory. Memory is embodied taste, and taste is what a body remembers. The body, then, is life. It speaks a language of communication between different forms of life. Within a dialogic relation, it creates a dialogue. The body writes in blood, and it speaks the unwritten. The mouth is associated with the production of language, but the face is expressive, the hands are tactile. Yet this same body is not a consolidation of identity and/or consciousness, but a repeated presence to itself in time and space. This presence is always an action — it is like art that needs an object, but not a

specific object, a subjectivity without a subject. At the limit of its sovereignty when its affects are shared, the body gives way to an act, releasing the body to more-than-itself. Bodily matter is an act of physicality as it is of the sensual, emotional and psychological. Life is the joint production of mind and matter: the liveliness of bodies occupying a duration.

> "Life is essentially determined in the act of avoiding obstacles, stating and solving a problem".
>
> (Deleuze, 1988: 16)

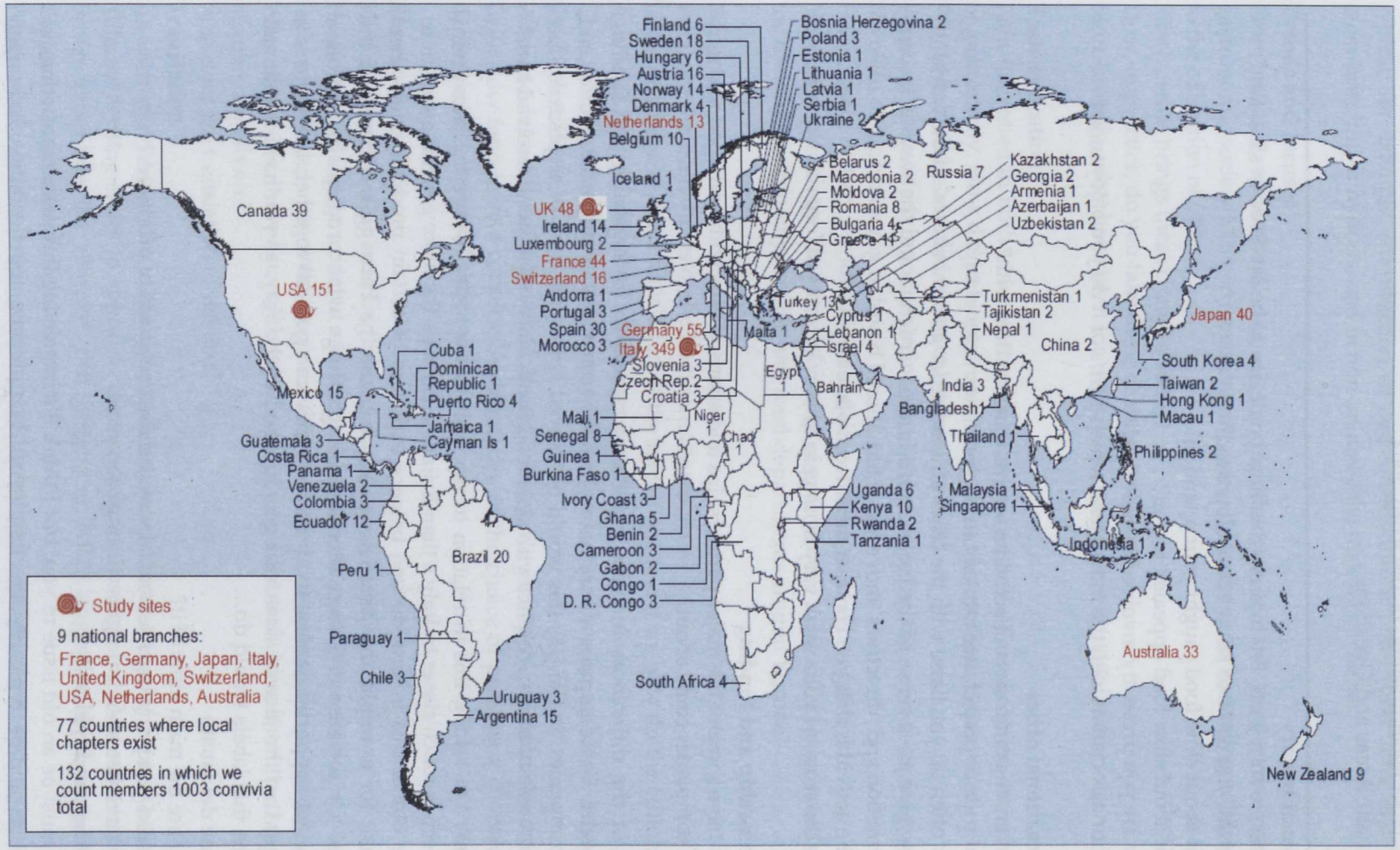
Life, like duration, is *élan vital*. What then of death?

> "To be an artist is like a final... you know, it's like you become an artist and then you die. I feel artistic and creative, but it seems like something one seeks to attain?"
>
> (Aletha)

Over the course of this thesis, the SF initiative of the Ark of Taste has made repeated appearances. Teetering on death, the rush to save the endangered 'flavours and savours' of the world was born of a creative impulse. Having been infused with liveliness, when do the products get off this figurative boat? Where then do they go? Slow Food is not the answer to everything that relates to food or slowness. But it has chosen to listen to the rhythmic quality of a natural life whose existence is possibility and potentiality. *Zoe*. And it has chosen to place this bare life in a community of its choice. *Bios*. It has chosen, and it has shown life to be an affective freedom.

Life thus is *zoe* and *bios*. Slow Food is not the only means of impelling utterances on these vital notions of life. But it is a very compelling case study. And a very good one at that.

Appendices



Appendix A: SF Map and fieldwork locations

Appendix B: SF Headquarters thematic areas and questions

Slow Food Headquarters, 14-18th April, 2003
Thematic Areas and Questions

Personal history
I guess, to start it off, I'm interested in how you came to be involved in slow food.
How did you come to know about slow food?
What about slow food caught your attention?
What about slow food appealed to you?
How are you presently involved in slow food?
In your association with the movement, which part/s of it do you enjoy most?

International office
What are the main sorts of activities/events that you deal with?
What sorts of projects are carried out on your international trip?
How often do you liaise with the other offices and/or governors around the world?
Please give me a sense of the loose organisational structure and the way, as it were, information and 'directives' move (eg. International board of governors...)
Do the activities that you conduct differ from place to place?
Does the scope of your work vary from year to year in terms of focus and/or content?

Sponsorship and funding
How have some of the major partnerships and sponsorships with both food and non-food companies come about?

One of the differences in Italy and Britain seems to be regarding the funding strategies. There appears a very natural tie between regional authorities, coffee and car companies. In the UK, this would be viewed with quite a bit of scepticism (size, corporate) and seen in conflict with slow food itself. How is this issue resolved here?

I guess I'm asking this in relation to my visit to the states, where the situation, I suspect, is much closer to Italy's than Britain's. Perhaps the more general question to come out of this is how do you balance exposure of certain products over other? Would, for example, the American turkey become the Parmiggiano cheese of the states? Or the case of Robert Mondavi being a huge wine producer as well as a moneyed supporter of slow food. Perhaps they can go well together, but there is a danger that the idea of slow food gets hijacked in the way, as you have mentioned before, that labels would do...

Salone del Gusto
What are the main aims of it?
How did you bring together such a vast and diverse group of producers?
How have you seen it progress through the years?

Tradition and typicality
This must be an old issue to you, but I think it's interesting how different notions of tradition and/or typicality are employed. I appreciate the flexibility and 'open

interpretation' that slow food affords these concepts, and perhaps we can talk about what, really, drives the notion of whether something is or is not traditional and/or typical, for example, introduction of new breeds into a place (how long ago?) or cross-breeding or hybrids, and in non-animals, the making of cheese.

Trends and focuses

From what I understand, one of the big changes of slow food was from a gastronomic society to an eco-gastronomic one, and perhaps an increasing adherence to the education of taste.

Firstly, what brings these changes about?

How, in practice, do you take these changes on board?

More broadly, what have been the decisive turning points in slow food?

Taste education

I am interested in both your masters of taste course, and your upcoming university of gastronomy. How did you come up with the idea to start these courses?

Whose help did you enlist to structure these courses?

What are the underlying ideas/principles behind selecting the various topics as you have/are doing?

How closely tied are the ideas/ideals of slow food to what is being taught?

How do you envisage the new university of gastronomy to be different/unique from the cooking/gastronomy schools and food departments around Europe?

Editorial

What are the main duties of the English editorial team?

Is the magazine a direct translation of the Italian one and if so, how do the editors of slow food Italy decide which articles get printed and which do not?

Does the magazine work each issue according to certain themes, and if so, how are these selected?

Who decides on the pictures that are used in the magazine? How about the cover?

Does slow food have a concerted/explicit idea of the choice of pictures it chooses to depict various aspects of slow food?

Slow web

How much of the slow food English webpage is done in Italy?

How often is the page updated and from where do you source your articles?

Is there a schedule you work to ensure that the material is diverse, but relevant?

Who maintains the page, and what sort of consideration goes into the layout, pictures, details etc?

Who does the translation of the text?

Translation

As with everything else, different cultures have different terms of expression and different writing styles to appeal to their audiences. I am reminded of talk about in Britain about how the 'flowery', rich imagery of Italian language does not appeal to the more reserved English people.

What are some of the language problems/discrepancies you face?

How do they differ from country to country, or even within each country itself?

Photography
Sometimes to express the essence of slow food requires more than words or journalistic writing. It does seem to be that both in Slow and on the web, there is a deliberate and careful attempt to employ the use of photography and graphics, and I would say that it is very effective!
Would you know about the process relating to the pictures/food photography that are used?
Is there an explicit method or agenda in the choosing and shooting of the various photos?

In some ways (and I could be reading too much into it!) But there seems to be quite a deliberate/concerted effort to ensure that the photography is of very high standards, and that is serves in partnership with the literature that accompanies it to evoke/entice the 'sense of slow food'.

To explain my slow food project: I have two broad areas of interests. One of them deals with the structuring of the movement, and by that I mean the connections and networks of people, associations and food products themselves through which slow food moves, propagates, perpetuates itself. The other looks at, if you like, the sensual aspects of the movement; so an inquiry into the pleasure of slow food. My interest here is into how the pleasurable tastes/smells of slow food products, and the events of slow food, may differ from everyday foods and eating, and how they may be expressed as such. So this is a bit more academic, but I'm interested into how much we can express ourselves through language, and by extension, if there are any other avenues (and I'm thinking notions of art and performances) of non-linguistic expressions of these pleasures — so something like the children's taste education that you propose will be very helpful. And of course, in putting these two areas together (the structural and the sensual), to gain an insight into the embodiment of slow food.

Organising structure (Britain)
How would you compare SF with the other food movements that you might be familiar with, for example, the Food for Britain, Countryside agency, Soil association (organic), Action for Aid, Sustain etc?
I know that last year, you worked quite closely with food for Britain especially in relation to the Salone del Gusto.
How did that come about?
What other related food groups and/or retail food outlets have associated with you?
Have they been successful partnerships?

Activities
What sorts of activities are organized in a calendar year, and which are the more popular ones?
Are the participants to these events mostly slow food members themselves, and if not, where else do the participants come from?

How do you usually advertise your activities, or how do you usually come to know about these events?
In some ways, slow food may be considered a relatively small group but with a large 'media' presence — in terms of activities, what is the sort of balance of attention or exposure that is acceded to consumers and producers?

Magazine
I am quite intrigued by slow as it seems to be targeting diff. audience...something between food magazines and serious cookbooks and journals. Remember reading gastronomica on 1st encounter and being quite amazed with the pool of food journalists and writers, as well as academic fields such as food historians. And of course slow is written in that fashion, and perhaps somewhat better...
Who is the target audience for the magazine?
What are the aims of the magazine? (information, coffee table book — really good pictures, pleasure in the reading)
Do you know how the writing team is ensembled?
Who decides on the topic to be written on?

Slow food product
Which slow food products are you familiar with?
What may be the typical slow food product of your area?
What, for you, defines a slow food product?
How closely does this definition conform or differ to that used by the
What, to you, separates slow food from other food 'types'?
Memory/taste
Finally, I'm looking into the idea of how it may be to talk about, write, and perhaps express in non-linguistic ways the 'tastes' of slow food.
Are there certain taste/smell/visual characteristics you would associate with slow food?
How would it be similar or different to the other foods that you have tasted and/or written about?
Perhaps more generally then, looking at the flavour of the slow food movement
Were there any particular slow food events or food items that you particularly remember?
What were poignant about those foods or about those events?
Agriculture/non-agriculture: the extent of cooking
How would the movement, especially with its turn now to being an eco-gastronomy movement, cope with convivia that a) are not widely agriculture b) originate from cities, the population of which by and large find it more difficult to make the connection between fine food and wine, and the land?

If slow food is about the right of pleasure to taste, how possible do you see an extension of the movement more into not just the basic, raw food products, but into the preparation and cooking of distinct dishes and cuisines?

Art/Performance

A major aim of my thesis is to advocate 'taste' and 'quality' as the thin red line that holds together slow food as consumer, producer, and ecologically oriented. And often the products need no explanation, and indeed they surpass words; it's usually a case of 'taste for yourself and see'. However, this may not be possible, and hence people use various ways of relaying this intention. Sometimes it's done through words/language. Other times it's pictures/graphics/photography all put together. And yet others, the need to take it out of the 'food context' to consider how we perceive food, and its relation to ourselves, to others and to our food interactions (land – dining).
Do you think you could express the tastes you experienced in slow food via art or in performances?

And then, perhaps, how may we start to express the pleasure we get from food that defies words/language? What other things can we bring in, or exude out to better envelop this idea of taste?

Slow food philosophy/ethos
It seems such an elusive concept, especially as slow food is such an open and fluid movement! What may be some of the underlying principles that you see as holding steadfast, and together, the movement?

Appendix C: Information statement/Research framework

My interest in the **Slow Food Movement** is borne out of a general love for food, but what really intrigues me are the ways in which this novel movement seeks to address a broad range of somewhat competing, somewhat paradoxical issues and agendas: gastronomic excellence with ecological concerns; consumers' 'right to taste' with artisan producers' 'right to produce'; eating to save endangered products; time-honoured, labour-intensive agriculture with sensory pleasures. Across the board, from defenders of biodiversity to regional farmers to food journalists and connoisseurs, people have staked a claim on the part of the movement that they support. And in a hotchpotch, idiosyncratic way, the movement has travelled, evolved and grown. My intellectual curiosity involves finding out how, and what sort of connections are made to ensure this is possible, and also to investigate my hypothesis regarding the present and future slow food movement: that the thin red line that brings together this spectrum of interests lies in advancing and explicating the notions of slow food *quality, taste and pleasure.*

Theoretically, I'm using an *Actor-Network* approach which seeks to conceptualise how both humans and non-human entities (for example, animal breeds, cheese products, local knowledges) have 'agency' in creating the webs of connections (and disconnections) that they are inextricably entwined in. Insofar as agriculture has a *life* that is not sufficiently encompassed by how food is popularly conceived — industrial, uniformed and supermarket-packaged, I seek to discover how these entities act as what an author has termed *immutable mobiles,* and interact to form, effect and reinforce networks/relationships. And while it is impossible to 'speak' to non-humans, much can be gleamed through informal interviews with slow food members and advocates on their involvements and opinions regarding the slow food movement, and won what it heralds for the future of food and agriculture.

As mentioned, I'm also interested in the sensations and affects that are experienced. These may be encountered when one tastes something traditional and familiar that recalls a memory, when one's palate is 'educated' by new tastes, when one is enjoying the company and conviviality of dinner with friends, or when one purchases or cooks food with an awareness that it is done as part of a slow food ethos. One way of expressing this is through conversations; another is by writing, which I propose to do via food diaries. Both these methods may employ the use of metaphors, analogies and descriptions to convey their meanings. However, in addition to these, there appears to be slow food-related pleasures and aesthetics in everyday life that defy explanation. Here, I suggest that where words are inadequate, art in its broadest sense may be called upon to better express these feelings and sensations. What, for you, supplements words in explaining slow food?

Appendix D: Questionnaire/Interview questions (General)

Researcher contact details:

Adeline Tay
adeline.tay@bris.ac.uk
6 Tyndall Park Mews
St. Michael's Hill
Bristol BS2 8DN
(Tel: 07769 556371)

These questions revolve around three broad thematic areas, namely slow food's appeals, sensory natures and artfulness. Depending on convenience and suitability, they may be answered electronically (as an attached word document) or function as guiding questions for a face-to-face interview. In the latter case, the questions may be sent to the interviewees beforehand as it might be useful especially for the 3rd part, where the methodology is experimental and may necessitate prior preparation and the bringing in of items to discuss during the interview.

1) The appeals of slow food

How did you first come to know about slow food?
What about slow food caught your attention?
What did you subsequently learn about slow food that appealed to you?
How are you presently involved with slow food (or its related components)?
Are you affiliated with any similar organisation/s?
In your association with the movement, which part/s of it do you enjoy most?

Which of these issues do you see slow food already tackling, or in a position to tackle in the future?

Biodiversity
Sustainability
Genetically-modified food (GMO)
Taste education
Discourse on food and cuisines through SLOW
Tradition/typicality
Aiding local artisan products/farming communities
Lobbying for changes in legislation
Alternative food networks/systems

2) The senses of slow food

Do you read any of the websites or publications that slow food produces?
Which do you read most often and why?
Which parts do you most enjoy?
Which slow food products are you familiar with?
What do you consider to be typical slow food products in your area?
What, for you, defines a slow food product?

How is this different from other food 'types'?

What do you consider a 'slow' setting to be?
Were there any slow food events that you remember in particular?
What was poignant about that event?

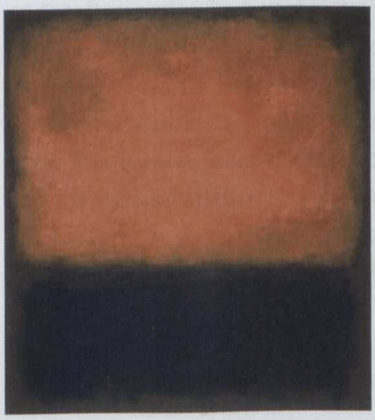
Do you think the taste/smell/visual characteristics of slow food products are important?
In what ways are/aren't they so?
How big a part, for you, does slow food play in appealing to our sensory and emotional faculties?

3) The art of slow food

Metaphors and terminologies used in language express the pleasure of slow food taste and quality and may sometimes not fully express what it is you wish to say. Here, I'm proposing that not only are the practices that enact slow food products and philosophy 'artful', but art itself may be employed to express slow food.

Examples of these might come from a variety of sources:

i) Abstract art (as shown below)

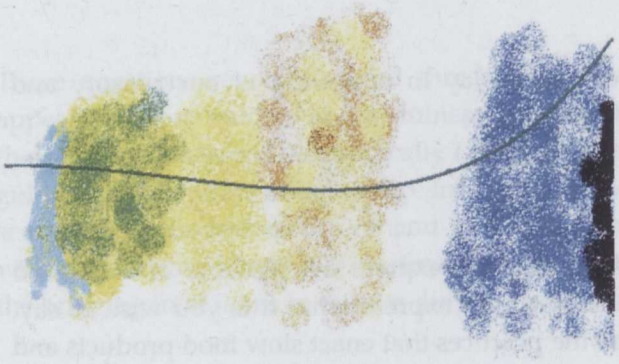


Mark Rothko's no. 14, 1960

Rothko's paintings were the impetus that got me thinking about how art could be adeptly incorporated into slow food. One thing that particularly started this was the way in which I sometimes could not adequately explain what it was about a slow food product and/or situation that I really enjoyed, especially when one was not around to physically experience it. In the case of this painting, what appeals to me is its starkness that hides little and allows me to focus on the intention of the strokes, and the contrast of the colours. I find it conveys some of the general ideas of slow food: the idea that as one eats, taste has an uneven, but temporal progression; that within that, one sometimes experience hues, nuances, and epiphanies not unlike in

art; but that overall, there is still a faint border that gels the slow food experience together.

ii) Personal drawings and sketches



This is a relatively simple example that I 'drew' using the *Paint* programme (in Accessories) found on all window operating systems, and it was done as a way of expressing the tastes of 5 olive oils that I tried at a SF Puget Sound event I attended in May. The bands of colours roughly correspond to the different oils, so in some sense the horizontal axis represents time. The height of each band of colour relates to the intensity of taste I felt, and for me, colour forms a near way of complementing words to express the textures of taste. Briefly, the first oil I found to be fresh, and extremely clean on the palate, which somehow seemed to dim the character of the second oil (which was still very crisp), the remnants of whose taste combined with the 'older' and weightier taste of the third. For some reason, the fourth oil had for me an 'absence' regardless of the food I tried it with, and contrasted greatly with the fifth — strong in flavour, well-rounded and buttery at the end. The black line is an approximate gauge to how much I enjoyed the oils.

iii) Still life

iv) Classical paintings

v) Photography

vi) Films

vii) Object

This may be a food (an organic piece of fruit maybe?) or non-food object, for example, a toy that was reminiscent of visits to your grandparents' where you tasted food that is now hard to find.

viii) Food-related performance

ix) Music

x) Others?

This third section is deliberately left very open for free-flowing ideas and creativity, though this by no means implies a *need* to do so. For some however, it may be that this is a viable outlet of expression of what they think/feel about slow food, applicable to the producer, the consumer, the artist, the academic. How do we account for the artisan practices that separate *slow* farmers from industrial ones? What for the consumer is the allure of performing *slow* into one's buying or eating habits? How might the artist's work be creatively drawn into the realm of an alternative food movement? In what ways may art figure in an academic's otherwise penchant for language and discourse?

These are some of the questions that I want to begin to explore...

Appendix E: Recorded interviews (64)

This table lists only the conducted interviews that were recorded. The list is alphabetically according to the country they were conducted in. The actual date falls within the time span given. The place names indicate where the interview took place, and any significant personal designation (other than their SF membership) is noted as follows.

Canada: July 2003

Frederique Phillips, Vancouver Island, Sooke Harbour House owner
Mara Jernigan, Vancouver Island, International Ark Committee member
Sinclair Phillips, Vancouver Island, Sooke Harbour House owner and SF leader

Italy: April 2003

Alberto Arossa, Bra, Master of Food coordinator
Alessandra Abbona, Bra, SF Communications officer
Carlo Fandi, Bra, Presidium Office officer
Cinzia Scarffidi, Bra, SF Awards officer
Elene Marino, Bra, Editorial office coordinator
Franca Chiarle, Bra, University of Gastronomic Sciences coordinator
John Irving, Bra, SLOW magazine writer and editor
Olivia Reviglio, Bra, SF Promotions officer
Renato Sardo, Bra, SF International Director
Simone Luparie, Editorial office coordinator
Vittorio Manganelli, Pollenzo, University of Gastronomic Sciences coordinator

United Kingdom: September 2002 — November 2003

Andrew Sharp, London, Herdwick lamb and sheep owner
Cheryl Cohen, London, London SF leader and Farmers Markets coordinator
John Fleming, Ludlow, Ludlow SF leader
Jonathan Murdoch, Cardiff, Prof. of Urban and Regional Planning, September 2002
Randolph Hodgson, London, Cheddar cheese presidium coordinate, Neal Dairy's Yard owner
Rosemary Fleming, Ludlow
Sarah Freeman, London, writer and author of 'English teas'
Silvija Davidson, London, London SF leader
Wendy Forgarty, London, UK SF Governor

United States of America: July 2003 — August 2003

Aletha Soule, Sonoma, potter
Allison Leber, Seattle, cheese shop owner and wine judge
Ann Evans, Davis, SF Davis leader
Anne Ritchie-Schlitt, Knightsen, Navajo-Churro sheep owner
Barbara Backus, Napa Valley, La Mancha goats owner and cheesemaker
Becky Burkeley, Orcas Island, gardener

Charles Finkel, Seattle, graphic designer and beer-maker
Cheryl Koehler, Oakland, freelance food journalist
Chou Hsiao Ching, Seattle, food journalist
Chris Carpenter, Napa Valley, winemaker and SF Napa Valley leader
David Foster, Seattle, educator
Debbie Lambert, Sonoma, process artist
Debra Sarver, Berkeley, teacher
Gail Feenstra, Davis, University of California, Davis sustainable agriculture programme coordinator
Gerry Warren, Seattle, SF Puget Sound leader
James Miller, Seattle, baker
JeNe Thomas, Sonoma, Prison food programme coordinator
Joni Trumbull, Orcas Island, Orcas Island SF leader
Jon Rowley, Seattle, fisherman and peach expert
Judith Fine-Sarchielli, Los Angeles, Whole Foods advisor
Judy Bertelson, Berkeley, physician
June Taylor, Berkeley, jam-maker
Krista Haimovitch, Berkeley, akido enthusiast
Leonard Bates, Seattle, Oenological Society officer
Lynn-Eve Fortin, Berkeley, Bacchus SF leader and Bay area SF Governor
Mark Middlebrook, Oakland, wineshop assistant
Nancy Falk, Berkeley, home cook enthusiast
Peter Halikus, Napa Valley, Dean and Delucca cook
Rex Bachus, Napa Valley, La Mancha goats owner
Robert Steinberg, Berkeley, physician and chocolate maker
Roger Downey, Seattle, newspaper editor and SF Puget Sound Leader
Sandy _, Berkeley, The Pasta Shop food coordinator
Serena Milano, New York, SF USA headquarters officer
Seth Roberts, Berkeley, Assoc Prof. of psychology
Soyoung Scanlan, San Francisco, cheesemaker
Stephanie Chiacos, Sonoma, Seamstress and potter
Susan St. George, Berkeley
Tanya Charter, Cazedero, Navajo-Churro sheep owner
Valerie Jackson, Berkeley, Bella Berkeley SF leader
Vito Passero, Oakland, East Bay SF leader
Yubi _, NewYork, SF USA headquarters office

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